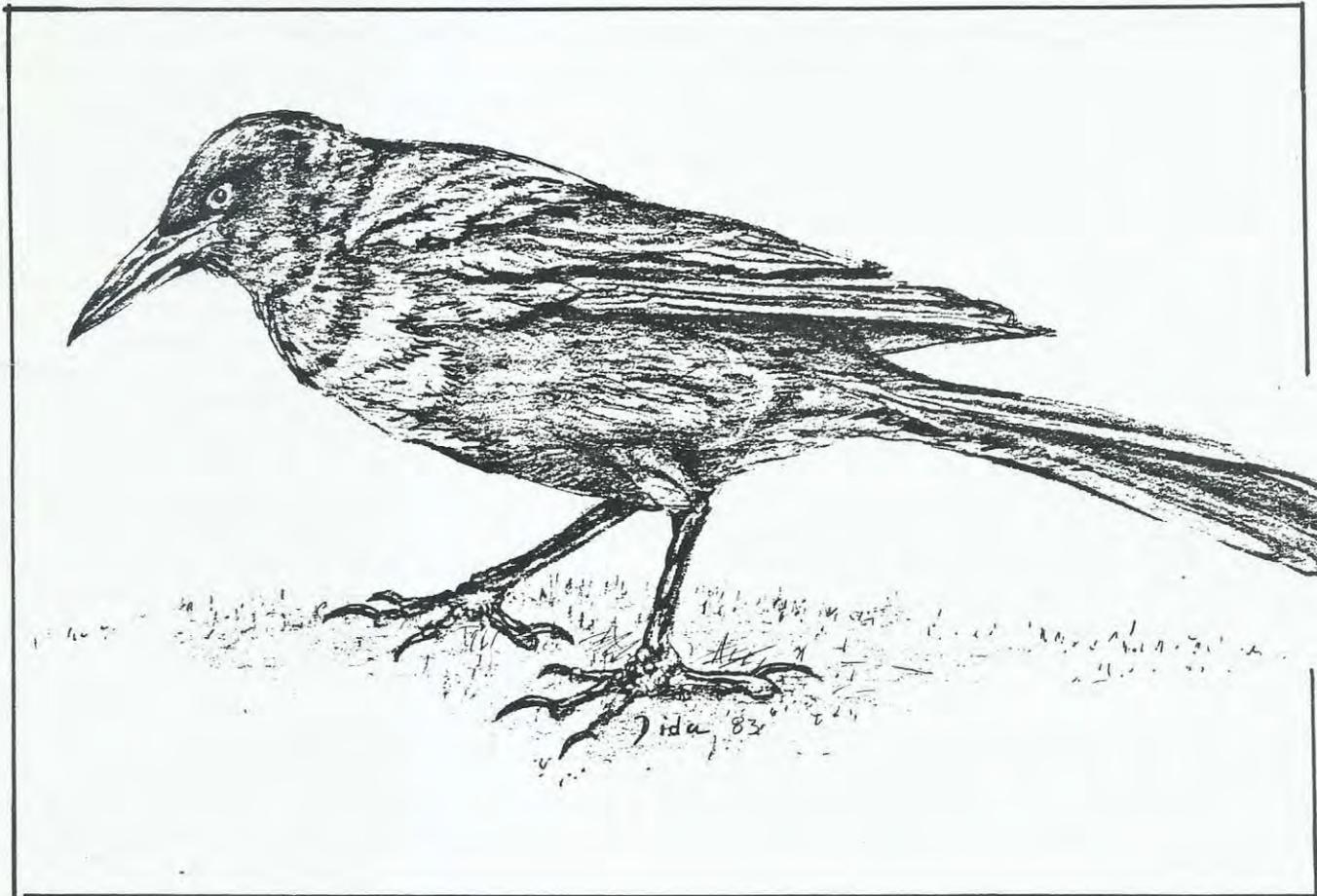




# TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 378, March 1986



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## President's Report

Last year at this time I wrote of glorious blue sky and the promise of returning Horned Larks. To-day we had a blizzard following on leaden skies, and a forecast of freezing rain. Remember the meeting last March? Snow up to here!

Again this year we had a table at Environmental Action Day at York University. Students talk to us and we talk to them. Thanks (in alphabetical order) to volunteers Howard Battae, Win Brown, Liz Knight and Eileen Mayo.

At Backus Woods there was a meeting on January 18 which will probably be seen as a landmark in conservation history. For the good news see page 18.

How many of you saw the TV programme David Suzuki's "The Nature of Things" on the Queen Charlotte Islands? I was appalled at the amount of land laid completely bare: a whole hilltop, long stretches of hillside. As individuals you should write the Minister of the Environment, Tom McMillan, in Ottawa, urging him to pressure the B.C. government to halt the logging and declare the South Moresby Islands a national park. See page 19.

Nearer to home we are supporting groups who want open space in Scarborough and in the Town of Vaughan preserved as parks or natural areas. The land in Scarborough is between the Rouge and the Little Rouge with tributary streams running through. There are several small woods, some identified as ESA's. This area could provide needed open space for the growing City of Scarborough and preservation would help ensure that the rivers remain in a healthy and stable condition.

The Uplands Golf Course site near Yonge and Highway 7 is a lovely, rolling area with the East Don running through it. Although it is a little beyond Metro, some of our members live in the area and some have used it for exploring. Development would cause the usual problems. In addition, nearly all the land south and west of the site will soon be developed, and open space will be needed for the hundreds of new families who will come into the area.

Yes! We are going to be at the Cabin in Sunnybrook Park again this year. We are now looking for volunteers for the Sunday afternoons from May to September. Why not try it? It's a pleasant, relaxing afternoon in the park with four volunteers sharing the "work". Call Helen Juhola, 924-5806, if you are interested in helping.

In December Tom Atkinson resigned from the Board of Directors. In accordance with the Constitution, the Board has appointed Clayton Lee to replace Tom and complete the rest of his term of office.

I am still hoping to find someone to act as recording secretary for the Board meetings. You don't need shorthand, but a typewriter is necessary.

Do you enjoy talking to people? We also need someone to make contact with the public relations people at radio stations and the newspapers to find out how, when and to whom we must submit information about our meetings to get them mentioned on the air or published. Call me if this interests you.

Profit from the sale of Christmas cards was \$162.87. This will not go into the bank account of the TFN, but will be donated to a project in which the TFN is interested.

Jean Macdonald  
(425-6596)

□



MARCH

Spring migration continues to build slowly but surely through this month. Some of our common nesting species return: American robin, red-winged blackbird, common grackle, song sparrow and, later in the month, killdeer and eastern meadowlark. As usual the lakeshore is busy. Its marshes and sheltered bays attract many species of diving and dabbling ducks. If we're lucky we may even see phoebes or tree swallows by month's end.

Our feathered friends are not the only harbingers of spring. Pussy willows appear, skunk cabbage is in flower, mourning cloak butterflies are on the wing and, of course, Leo the Lion is rising in the southeastern sky. Some may find it of interest to keep a simple record of when the first signs of spring appear. These records, if kept from year to year, may make for interesting comparisons down the road.

Phil Joiner

○ FULL MOON (March 10)

○ DARK OF THE MOON (March 26)

▷ FOR OTHER OUTINGS AND EVENTS OF INTEREST THIS MONTH, SEE PAGES 38 and 39.

Sunday March 2 1 pm	<u>Humber Bay Park East</u> - BIRDS Leader: Bruce Parker Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Lakeshore Blvd. West at Park Lawn Rd.	Lakeshore, Etobicoke
Wednesday March 5 1:30 pm	<u>Pine Hills Cemetery</u> - NATURE WALK Leader: Eileen Mayo Meet at the southeast corner of St. Clair Ave. East and Warden to walk east.	Taylor Creek, Scarborough
Saturday March 8 10 am	<u>University of Toronto Greenhouses</u> - NATURE ARTS Leader: Mary Cumming Meet on the northwest corner of College St. and University Ave. The subject will be "flowers". Bring stool, and cameras. Lunch optional.	Toronto
Sunday March 9 1 pm	<u>Lambton Woods</u> - NATURE WALK Leaders: John and Heather Harris Meet at the Humbertown Plaza on the west side of Royal York road north of Dundas.	Humber, Etobicoke

▷

Get your free RIDE GUIDE from any subway station.  
 MAPART map of Metropolitan Toronto is recommended (about \$3.00).  
 Sunday passes may be bought at any time for \$3.30 each from any subway station.  
 TTC information: 393-4636

## MARCH OUTINGS (cont'd)

Wednesday Cedarvale Ravine - NATURE WALK Don, Toronto  
 March 12 Leader: Gloria Sommerville  
 1:30 pm Meet on the northeast corner of St. Clair Avenue West and Bathurst Street.

Saturday Glendon Campus - TREES West Don, North York  
 March 15 Leader: Tom Atkinson  
 9 am Meet at the gates to Glendon on the eastside of Bayview Avenue at Lawrence Avenue East.

Wednesday Hart House - NATURE ARTS (TOUR) Toronto  
 March 19 Leader: Betty Paul  
 10 am Meet at the Royal Ontario Museum subway exit on Queen's Park Crescent just south of Bloor Street West. We will be having a tour of the art in Hart House. Lunch optional (cafeteria). Sketching materials optional.

OUT OF TOWN  
 Saturday Aylmer, Ontario - SWANS southwest of Metro  
 March 22 Leader: Hugh Currie  
 8 am to 6 pm Call Eva Davis (694-8928) if you want to attend. Confirm by sending your cheque for \$20.00 (to cover transportation) payable to TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS SWAN OUTING to Eva Davis, 203-1080 Kingston Rd., Scarborough M1N 1N5. Bus leaves promptly from the northeast corner of Yonge and York Mills at 8 am and returns to the same corner at 6 pm. Bring lunch and a snack as we will not be stopping where there are restaurants. (Washroom on bus.)  
BUS

Sunday Taylor Creek - NATURE WALK Taylor Creek, East York  
 March 23 Leaders: Melanie Milanich and Clayton Lee  
 1 pm Meet on the southwest corner of Woodbine and O'Connor.

OUT OF TOWN  
 Wednesday Bruce's Mills - MAPLE SYRUP northeast of Metro  
 March 26 Leader: Cathy Heynes  
 11 am to 4 pm Call Eva Davis (694-8928) if you want to attend. Confirm by sending your cheque for \$12.00 (to cover transportation and entry fee) payable to TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS SYRUP OUTING to Eva Davis, 203-1080 Kingston Rd., Scarborough M1N 1N5. Pancakes with maple syrup may be purchased for lunch, then we will explore the area. Bus leaves promptly from Finch passenger pick-up at 11 am and returns there at 4 pm.  
mini-BUS

Sunday Scarborough Bluffs - GEOLOGY lakeshore, Scarborough  
 March 30 Leader: Nick Eyles  
 12:30 pm to 5 pm Call Eva Davis (694-8928) if you want to attend. Confirm by sending your cheque for \$12.00 (to cover transportation) payable to TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS BLUFFS OUTING to Eva Davis, 203-1080 Kingston Rd., Scarborough M1N 1N5. We will be visiting several sites along the bluffs. Bus leaves promptly from Kennedy passenger pick-up at 12:30 pm and returns there at 5 pm.  
mini-BUS

□

This Month's Cover

"Common Grackle, Humber Valley"  
by Diana Banville

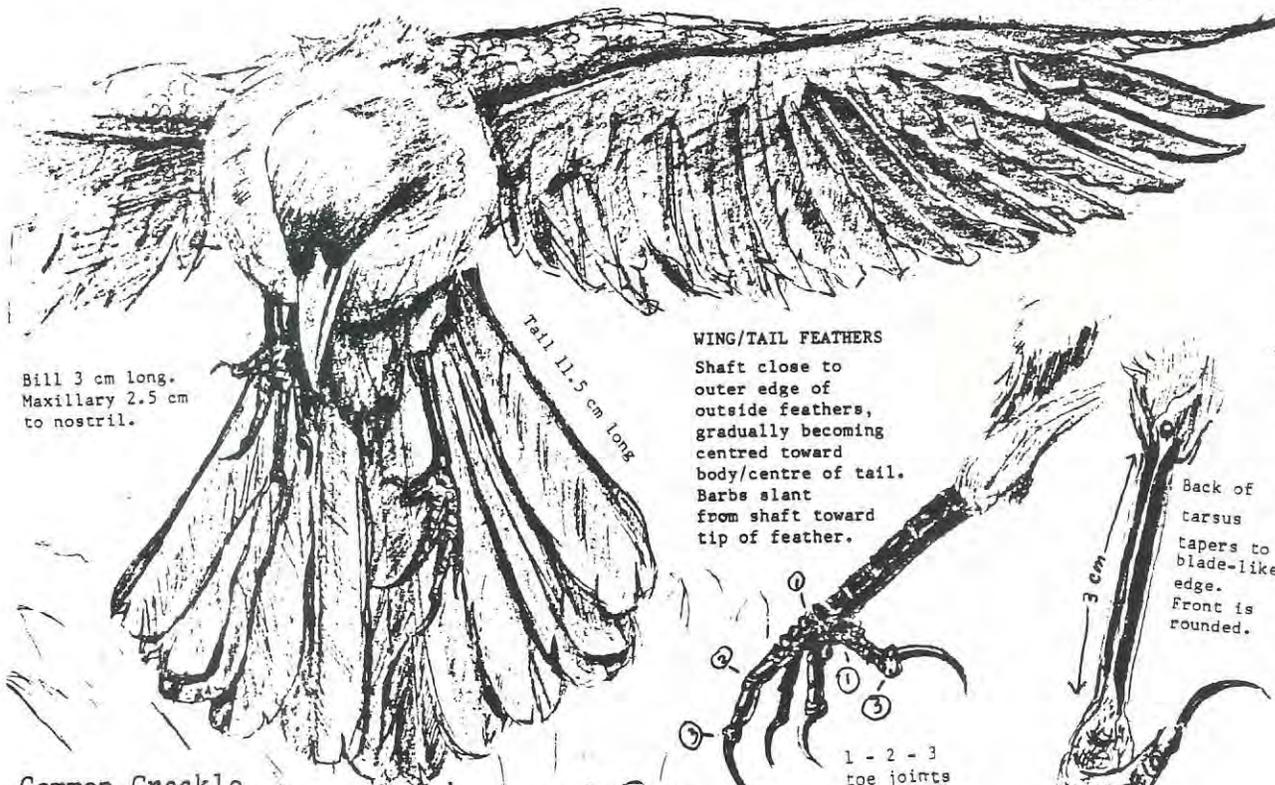
The cause of death of this lovely specimen was not evident. We found it lying at our feet, on Helen Smith's bird outing of April 2, 1983, as we made our way back to Old Mill Station. It seemed only right to do some measuring and make some sketches. Casualties are sometimes missing feathers but this one seemed to have the right number of primaries (for its family) and tail-feathers. I recall helping to band a grackle at the Toronto Bird Observatory on Muggs Island about 1979. We briefly examined the interior of the mouth which was well equipped to hold food. Also I noticed the lower mandible had no angle toward the mouth-opening as the red-winged blackbird has, but was smoothly curved upward on the edge. As I typed out my field-notes to accompany the illustration below, for better legibility, I wished I had made more notes at the time.

DB

Lesser coverts, mantle, nape, back bronze. Edges of feathers catch light for the metallic effect.

Alula reflects turquoise.  
Greater wing coverts reflect violet/purple/bronze.

Wingspread 38 cm  
Wing chord 12.5 cm  
(from bend)



Bill 3 cm long.  
Maxillary 2.5 cm to nostril.

Tail 11.5 cm long

WING/TAIL FEATHERS  
Shaft close to outer edge of outside feathers, gradually becoming centred toward body/centre of tail. Barbs slant from shaft toward tip of feather.

1 - 2 - 3  
toe joints  
(back toe #1 + #3 only)

Coverts rounded on both sides.

FLIGHT FEATHERS:

of wing (remiges)  
- most pointed toward wing-tip, gradually blunter toward body.  
Nine primaries dull brown.  
Nine secondaries reflect purple faintly.

of tail (rectrices)  
- rounded on inner edge except for two central tail-feathers which are straight on both edges. Below, outer edge of each feather is brownish while inner edge (in shade) can be bluish; otherwise dull brown

Back of tarsus tapers to blade-like edge. Front is rounded.

Common Grackle  
a casualty in  
Humber Valley  
Apr. 2 1983

8 narrow greater coverts toward leading edge,  
10 broader, softer, rounded coverts toward trailing edge.

Dida



# Keeping in touch . . .

Dear Helen,

December, 1985

Merry Christmas! It doesn't look like it or feel like it here in the tropics, but that's ok with me.

Hope the TFN is as vital a force as ever. I sure learned a lot working with you folks and will never forget it. Even now, my thoughts range to "Wau the Green" as it's a fact in this mountain town, but not always appreciated. In my job here I can have a little impact on preserving nature but time and money have to be rationed ten times more carefully.

Papua New Guinea is a naturalist's paradise. It is almost a blessing that a good, comprehensive field guide to the birds isn't out yet (tho' it's expected in January) as I wouldn't be able to concentrate on my job for checking birds! I just keep my head down and work, more-or-less seven days per week, and with luck will be organized enough to have more free time just when Ainceton gets the book out. I photographed a spider in our garden with a leg-span of six inches, putting my free hand beside it for scale. Edna said after that I'd better count my fingers. Three or four kinds of orchids entwine the fence-line down the driveway; the butterflies are grand; there's every kind of exotic house plant growing wild, or planted -- whether snakes or mites or ferns (they are profuse) or mosses or whatever. You could spend a lifetime on them here.

To back up a little: We're here with CUSO for two or three years. I have a three-year leave of absence from Esso. Edna is teaching high school beginning this time next month, and my job is Town Manager for two towns joined by a common Town Authority, Wau and Bulolo. Both will appear on your maps, as they are "old" towns, having sprung up in a gold rush of the early thirties. (Alluvial gold is still mined, but is not big on an international scale.) The two towns are also joined by a hair-raising road along the beautiful Bulolo Gorge.

Wau is at 1000 m and the climate is just what you might prescribe -- hot afternoons, cool nights and enough rain to keep things lush without dampening your spirits. Now that's the good part. Cockroaches and poverty are the other part, but it's a fascinating nation with great potential that just may be realized. Population growth is out of hand and nobody addresses that problem.

Most important, please say hello to all of our favourite people in the club, and Happy New Year.

Wally Platts  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

continued on next page... ▷

Sand  
on top of snow  
on top of sand-dunes.

haiku by Mary Cumming  
Long Point, March, 1985

KEEPING IN TOUCH (cont'd)

Dear Helen,

Jan. 30, 1986

It was with particular interest that I read Glen Norcliffe's letter about the turtle shoals. I can imagine his fascination as he says, for I too was fascinated just reading his letter. Natural history is such a wonderful vocation for there are always such intriguing observations to share with fellow naturalists and, no matter how unusual the observation, there will be someone who is touched by the story. Having an interest in amphibians and reptiles it seems that I am often asked to comment on possible explanations for certain field observations. More often than not I can only speculate as to why or how these animals do what they do. That is precisely the reason that I find them so fascinating. A letter such as that sent by Mr. Norcliffe is one more example of the many questions that reptiles and amphibians seem to generate. In this case, the observations are unique for I don't recall having heard of such a concentration of turtles or such behaviour. For what it is worth, I would like to speculate as to why the turtles may have behaved in such a manner. In doing so, I will explain some of the natural history of turtles themselves.

All of our southern Ontario turtles hibernate under water with some choosing rivers while others choose lakes or ponds, depending on species, and what bodies of water are available. Species found in the area, and large enough to navigate Lake Huron, include snapping turtles, painted turtles, wood turtles, Blandings turtles and map turtles. In spring, turtles may move from the hibernation sites to other bodies of water to breed or to feed. It is possible that these turtles were involved in such a seasonal movement, but because of the late date (Dominion Day), this is unlikely. Most turtles are active in early April and these would have had ample time to move before this observation was made. Turtles also move some distance to find suitable egg-laying sites and these are often traditional sites that have been used for decades. It is also unlikely that so many turtles would be involved and that the warm well-drained soils sought for nesting couldn't be found inland or closer to the summer ponds. There is also the possibility that the turtles were washed out into the lake during a sudden flood caused by heavy rain or the breaking of a beaver dam, but this is also unlikely and even so the turtles would be scrambling to get back to the original pond and not leisurely swimming in shoals.

I feel that there may be two reasonable explanations for Mr. Norcliffe's observations. With the Bruce generating station about 20 kilometres north, the turtles may have been following a stream of warm discharge water emanating from the plant. They may also have been moving to the warmer discharge waters from several hibernation sites along the shores of Lake Huron. The turtles would enjoy both the warm water and the abundance of foods that are also to be found in warmer waters.

The second possible explanation, and one that has been observed elsewhere with turtles, involves feeding. In early summer when plankton blooms occur in lakes turtles will float among these microscopic animals and plants and feed. Some of the zooplankton can reach 2 mm, just large enough to be seen, and certainly visible when they bloom in the millions. This food source would be like caviar to the turtles. These blooms would most likely occur in any warm discharge water and there is the possibility that the turtles were both seeking the warm water and the food source.

Of course, none of these may adequately explain this exciting observation and I will endeavour to share the story with other herpetologists in the expectation of hearing other possibilities or stimulating others to examine this story.

Bob Johnson

## KEEPING IN TOUCH (cont'd)

Dear Diana:

January 7, 1986

...Early in December we were driving along the highway, with a very strong wind blowing, and were surprised to see a huge flock of birds circling and swirling around in a massive cloud of wings...- they were swallows! Usually we don't see them until early spring, but there they were - a close-knit pack, so close it's a wonder they didn't bang into each other...there were many hundreds - perhaps even thousands, for it was the largest mass of birds I had ever seen. Where did they come from, and where did they go? We have not seen a swallow since...

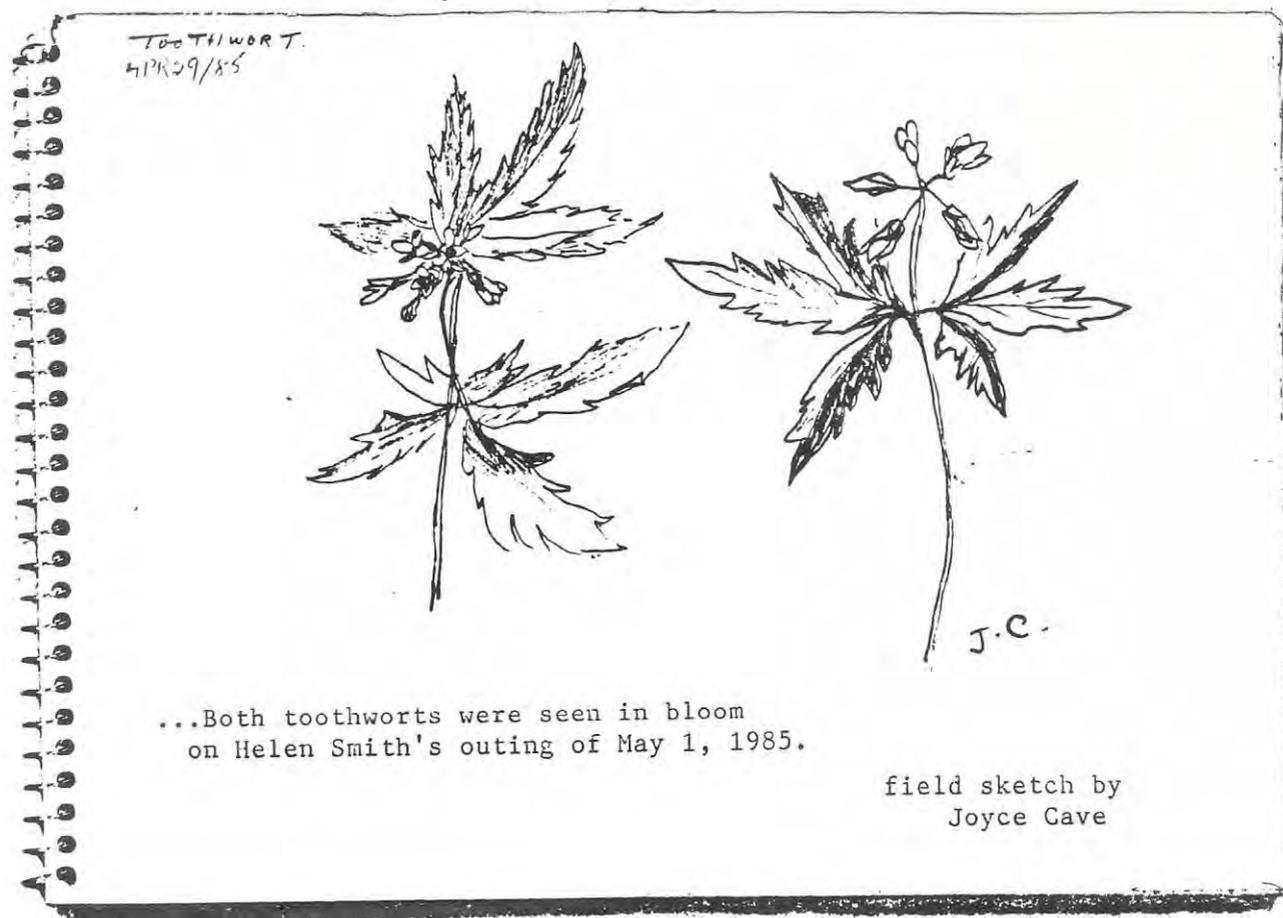
January 9, 1986

...the swallows began to appear this week. Saw them in Clearwater, and they are now also patrolling our pond in the park. I guess that original flock, which seemed to contain all the swallows for the state of Florida, has now broken up, and gone their separate ways.

Also, we went to visit friends in a new park and found that their mobile home faces on to Lake Tarpon Canal, a long cut joining Lake Tarpon and Old Tampa Bay. The cut is about 100 feet wide, and a great place to see pelicans hovering near the men who fish there. On the other side of the cut, in a field populated mostly with cattle (and cattle egret) is a huge pine tree, containing a nest with a pair of eagles. What a way to watch them - just sit on your back porch, and have a front-row seat! We must go back and see our friends (and the birds!) more often!...Have fun in the snow.

Don (Carmichael)  
Safety Harbour, Florida

Ed. Note: Where DO our swallows go in winter? See page 32.



# OUTINGS REPORT

Spring 1985 - March, April, May

Writing this Spring Outings Report in the middle of January isn't easy. It's very cold outside and has been so for days now. Spring seems a long way off. By the time you read this, however, there will be some signs of spring in evidence. Hibernation is over and it's time to get outdoors and enjoy.

Last year 950 members did just that by attending some of the 39 spring outings given by the TFN. Twelve of the walks were huge successes with an average of 46 people per outing. Bob Johnson led 65 people on a walk through Centennial Swamp; a group of 61 followed Ed Freeman around the Brickyards and the Scarborough Bluffs; and on separate occasions, Howard Battae (April 28) and George Fairfield (May 20) led groups of 51 and 60 to the Toronto Islands.

If, on the other hand, you prefer a smaller group, allowing a more personal rapport with fellow members and the leader, then the remaining 27 outings were more to your liking with an average of 15 people per walk.

At this point I would usually give a brief description of some of the outings. Instead I am asking you to read one of the reports that was sent in by one of our leaders.

Phil Joiner

May 1, 1985

Must it rain on outing day? Come down in sheets? Yes, that was the weather on May 1 at 11 am. We were five hardy souls, all appropriately dressed.

Smythe Park is really a little one, running between Jane St. and Scarlett Rd., the reclaimed site of one of Con Smythe's gravel pits, with several ponds, and an untouched hillside of trees and wildflowers along the south. A preliminary scouting had shown it to be like one big garbage dump -- paper and plastic everywhere! So armed with shopping bags and kitchen tongs, we started the outing in the rain, collecting garbage -- 20 bags of it! Items of more interest to us were also noted -- a dead brown snake, a mess of smelt someone had dumped by the roadside, a muskrat, and also a big toad that had taken shelter in a rusted tin can!

By lunchtime the rain had stopped, thank goodness, and we carried on. Note-worthy were sightings of a green-backed heron, a blue-gray gnatcatcher, solitary vireo seen and heard, yellow-rumped warblers and palm warblers. A flock of goldfinches was busily devouring seeds of purple loosestrife in the little swamp, and you should have seen the first-year white-throated sparrow try three times before he could complete his song!

Flowers were much in evidence, here a patch of skunk cabbage, there some remaining coltsfoot, marsh marigolds, masses of purple cress, yellow trout lily, wild ginger, both toothworts, to name a few.

So, don't let the rain stop you.

Helen Smith

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## TORONTO REGION Amphibian & Reptile REPORT

The 1985 amphibian and reptile inventory continues to be a popular TFN project and enjoys the support of many members. I certainly enjoy sharing the enthusiasm of so many members, some who are realizing for the first time the appeal that reptiles and amphibians can have for the naturalist. For their support I would like to thank the following: D. Banville, S. Cappell, A. Ferns, B. Gordon, C. & J. Goodwin, A. Greenbaum, D. Grinton, J. Harris, J. Hernandez, K. Irie, B. Jefferson, E. Johns, H. Juhola, C. Lee, P. Louis, T. Mason, P. McGough, N. Mun, D. Peuramaki, R. Powell, T. Suddon, and G. Tokarz.

In 1985 there were 110 sightings of twelve species, six amphibians and six reptiles. Seventy-eight sites were reported as having at least one amphibian or reptile species. Last year there were eighty-four sightings of sixteen species. The earliest sighting was of American toads seen on April 3 with choruses of wood frogs and chorus frogs also heard on April 3. The first reptiles appeared April 7 when both garter snakes and painted turtles were observed. The latest sighting was of a northern brown snake seen November 13 when the temperature was 12°C. These 1985 dates compare with April 5 (1983) and April 2 (1984) for the earliest sightings and November 25 (1983) and October 16 (1984) for the latest sightings.

It is interesting to compare dates of first calling amphibians in different areas of the province. These can indicate subtle climatic variables not always evident to the casual observer. For example, plant indicators of spring on the Niagara Peninsula are generally considered to be about seven days in advance of Toronto. This temporal variation is confirmed by our amphibians with frogs calling on the Niagara Peninsula by March 27, but not calling in Toronto until eight days later.

Wood frogs were heard in four Toronto ponds. They are among the earliest choruses to enrich our urban landscape. In Centennial Swamp (still scheduled to be drained for housing), I observed frogs calling in a snowstorm April 3; first eggs laid on April 8 after several freezing nights, and at dusk on April 10 several clumps of mating frogs. These clumps, most often associated with breeding toads, were usually made up of a single female with up to nine males trying to dislodge other males from her back. A few minutes later an American bittern was observed as it consumed large numbers of frogs. Mating clumps are highly visible and respond slowly to any disturbance. I was able to approach and take several photos before the clump was able to take refuge below vegetation on the bottom of the pond. It is also interesting to note that the hatching success of the first wood frog eggs laid April 8 was much lower than the April 10 spawning as the first eggs went through several nights of freezing temperatures and surface ice.

One of the more unusual sightings involved a population of American toads calling from a flooded swimming pool cover. The dark cover heats up quickly in the spring and supported a nice algal bloom. The toads were first heard about May 1 and by May 16 thousands of tadpoles were emptied from the cover and released into a local pond. During this period, any toads caught and taken up 100 yards from the pool immediately returned to their new "pond". In the light of this experience, it would seem that there is a good possibility for the success of backyard ponds constructed as breeding sites for urban amphibians. Other reproduction sightings included snapping turtles hatching near Highland Creek on October 22 (last year hatching was observed September 25); two hatching red-bellied snakes found August 24 in the heart of Toronto near Yonge and Eglinton; and a mating ball of garter snakes seen near Etobicoke Creek on

## TORONTO REGION AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE REPORT (cont'd)

April 23.

There were more sightings this year of garter snakes on the Leslie Street Spit. Two melanistic (black) garter snakes were found on the spit and another was found near Yonge and Eglinton. One northern brown snake was observed being caught by a grackle which, after flying up into a hawthorn tree, impaled the snake on a spike. The bird ate only the head which may explain several sightings of headless snakes.

A late but exciting addition to last year's inventory was a smooth green snake seen at West Pond and the report of another green snake seen eating a grasshopper at this same location. The association of this species with the nearby pond is consistent with all other sightings of this species in Toronto.

On a final note, it is interesting that during the summer-long biological inventory of the Etobicoke Creek Valley, participants found nine of the twelve species recorded for Metro Toronto. As we have seen throughout this study, there are reptiles and amphibians and good habitat to be found for those inclined to look. It is unfortunate that Centennial Swamp (Tall Pines Swamp), one of the best wetlands in Metro Toronto is still scheduled to be developed. This development was to begin with the draining of the swamp during 1985, but technical problems caused a delay. We still do not know how this development would affect the unique red maple forest adjacent to the pond. Let's all hope that the delay can be used to advantage to find a way to retain this urban wetland as an education site. The City of Scarborough is boldly going ahead with a plan to destroy what other cities are spending millions trying to create. And this is an urban resource that can only increase in value both quantitatively and qualitatively as Scarborough becomes more developed. Please feel free to let Mayor Gus Harris know that there is room for both people and wetlands in this new City of Scarborough.

This summer will be the fifth year of the inventory. My thanks to those who have continued to support and contribute to the inventory. We hope to produce an expanded, updated and illustrated (by wildlife artist Paul Harpley) guide to our amphibians and reptiles and the wetlands we all enjoy. I look forward to hearing from you in 1986!

Species found in 1985: red-back salamander, American toad, chorus frog, green frog, leopard frog, wood frog; snapping turtle, painted turtle, milk snake, northern brown snake, red-belly snake, garter snake

Bob Johnson

□

Nature has its moods ~  
the smile of a summer day  
or a thundrous frown.

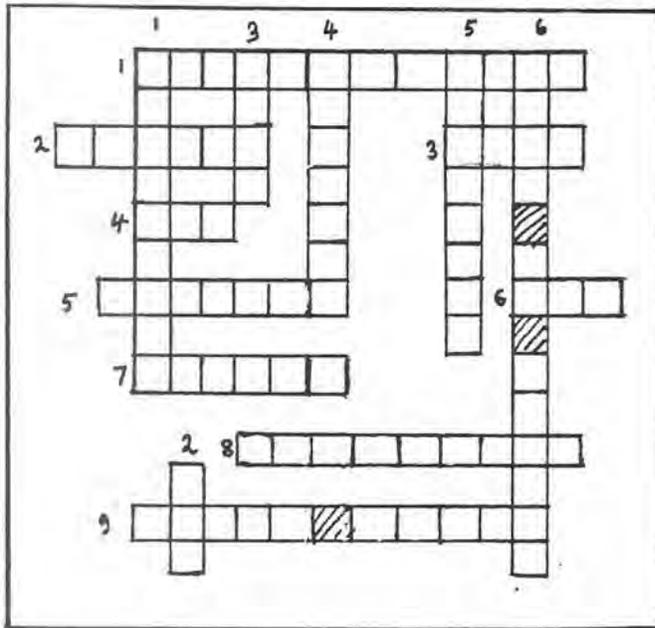


MY MY!

# If you're so smart... TRY YOUR HAND

AT THIS BOTANICAL CROSSWORD PUZZLE. You might start by looking under "my" in a good dictionary for both 1. across and 1. down...

You may also need to refer to a field guide for some answers.



## ACROSS

1. Any plant living in class association with ants, for pollination, protection, etc.
2. Early botanist with the National Museum of Canada. (A nature club was named for him.)
3. Any plant growing in a place where it is not wanted.
4. One of the marginal flowers surrounding the central disk of flowers in the Aster family.
5. A genus of prairie wildflowers, pink, white or mauve in colour and commonly sold in florists' shops; also known as "blazing star".

6. Low, peaty woodland covered wholly or in part by water.
7. The enlarged, sac-like portion of the stamen, where pollen is produced.
8. The latest scientific name for the mint family. (It's based on the name of a mint genus which just happens to start with the same two letters as those of the older family name.)
9. Only national park in Ontario where prickly pear cactus grows.

## DOWN

1. Symbiotic association of soil fungus with roots of a higher plant.
2. A fruit which splits into two valves containing one to many seeds.
3. Common name of a plant with square stem, aromatic leaves, and often used as a tea.
4. Scaly, often pendulous spikes of either male or female flowers of certain trees and shrubs.
5. A large hummingbird-like insect which pollinates tubular meadow flowers in the daytime.
6. The most common tree in downtown Toronto.

Jim Hodgins

Answer on page 25.



# Toronto Region BIRD RECORDS

for the period Dec. 16, 1985 - Jan. 15, 1986.  
 (exclusive of 1985 Christmas Bird Count : see No.377, Feb.1986  
 & 1986 Winter Waterfowl Count : see pg.16.)

## CONTRIBUTORS:

Maureen Allain, Howard Battae, Sandy Cappell, Glenn Coady, Mike DeLorey, Dennis Duckworth, Karin Fawthrop, Dorothy Fletcher, Clive & Joy Goodwin, Beth Jefferson, Helen & Aarne Juhola, William Mansell, Jean Macdonald, Diane Mackie, Linda Marshall, Eileen Mayo, Anna McCoy, Maisie Newby, Gwen Ormerod, Bruce Parker, Joan Patterson, Don Peuramaki, Suzanne Poodrey, David Selley (DSe), Helen Smith, South Peel Naturalists' Club Outing, David Stephenson (DSt), Ilmar Talvila, Harold Taylor, Don Theirs, Anne Thompson, Toronto Field Naturalists' Outing, Marg Turner, Bruce Wilkinson, Peter Whelan, Bob Yukich, Larissa Zviedris  
 many observers:m.ob.

Winter and cold, freezing winds are upon us. Many non-birders expect that all the birds have departed for warmer climes. Some birders searching our wooded parks are beginning to think the same thing. Many TFN Outings report only the common species, if that.

### WHERE ARE THE BIRDS?

Thanks to the reports of the above contributors you can also be successful in your searches for winter birds. Most reports have come from people with feeders. In fact Lambton Woods seems totally devoid of life some days because all the birds have found free hand-outs from the feeders along the western slope.

If you don't feel like being a "peeping Tom", then probably the best spots to explore are the waterfront parks. Lake Ontario and the Toronto Harbour, in spite of the polluted water, are the winter habitat of a great variety of species that breed in the Arctic. Diving ducks, especially can be seen in great numbers, feeding and seeming to enjoy the chilling waters. Note how many Arctic species are predominantly white and black. Which species feed closest to shore? Which ducks spend the longest time under water when they dive for food? Listen to the talkative Old Squaw and try to count their numbers, noting increases or decreases.

Winter birding is great fun, as well as comparatively easy, for beginning bird-watchers.

## ABBREVIATIONS:

LSPH:Lake Shore Psychiatric Hospital, LS:Lake Shore, M:Marsh, R:River, P:Pond, Ck:Creek, B:Bay, Pk:Park, V:Valley, N:North(ern), S:South, E:East, W:West, Ld:Last date reported

## LOONS THROUGH GEESE:

Great Blue Heron	Late Dec.	Oakville, Don Valley, Rosedale Golf Course (4X6" tracks in river)	m.o A
Tundra Swan	Frequently	W.Waterfront (1-2)	m.o
Mute Swan	Several	" (adept at catching food thrown)	m.o
	Few	Bluffers	K
Trumpeter Swan	Jan.1	Humber B.	I
Hybrid:White-fronted X Canada Goose	Frequent	Bluffers (light cheeks, black under- tail, neck size)	H
Snow Goose (Blue-phased)	Resident	Marie Curtis	M
Canada Goose	Frequent	LS (resident flocks augmented by wild companions)	m.o
Wood Duck	Dec.21	Grenadier F. (Ld)	H
American Black Duck	Large numbers	" & Humber B.-LSPH Landfill	m.o
Mallard	Common	Wherever there is open water Paired & mating long before spring, as are many of the other ducks.	m.o
Northern Shoveler	Dec.22-Jan.4	Humber B. (1-2)	m.o
Gadwall	Common	Lakefront & Sewage Treatment plants	m.o
American Wigeon	Dec.30	6th St.&LS (feeding on grass with geese)	
	Jan.6-15	New Toronto (fewer, scarce Jan.15)	B
Redhead	Jan.15	W.LS (uncommon lately)	B

▷

## TORONTO REGION BIRD RECORDS (cont'd)

Greater Scaup	1000s	Along Lake	(in close knit rafts at -15°C) under calm conditions)	BJ
Lesser Scaup	Few	"	(in amongst Greater Scaup) Look for a more pointed, purple head.)	m.ob.
Oldsquaw	100-1000s	Far out on the lake		m.ob.
White-winged Scoter	Dec.21-Jan.2	Numbers noticeably down.	Why?	m.ob.
Common Goldeneye	Jan.12	Humber B.		DP
	Common	Lake & Don, Credit & Humber R.	(fishing in rushing rivers)	m.ob.
Bufflehead	Common	Lake front		m.ob.
Common Merganser	Common	"	(in rafts of 30-50)	m.ob.
Red-breasted Merganser	Fewer	"		m.ob.
Ruddy Duck	Dec.24&28	Humber B.		BY&IT

## HAWKS, ETC.

Northern Harrier	Dec.27-Jan.	Humber B.	(1 frequently seen)	m.ob.
	Dec.29	Spit		DP
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Dec.21	Lambton Woods	(chasing a Red-tail)	BW
	Jan.5	Lynde Shores		BW
Red-tailed Hawk	Several	Resident in most ravines	(at least 12 reported)	m.ob.
Rough-legged Hawk	Dec.26	Don Valley		LZ
	Dec.30	Base of Spit		DP
American Kestrel	Residents	Humber B., Base of Spit		m.ob.

## PHEASANTS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS:

Ring-necked Pheasant	Occasional	Lambton Woods		IT
	Scarce	Humber Arboretum	(1)	DS
Ruffed Grouse	Jan.11	Ford Dr.&Upper Middle Rd.	(3)	SPNC
Purple Sandpiper	Jan.6	Sunnyside	(Ld)	m.ob.

## GULLS:

Ring-billed Gull	Dec.21	Sunnyside	(60)	HS
Herring Gull	Frequent	Lake		m.ob.
Thayer's Gull		Bronte		WM
Iceland Gull	End of Dec-			
	Jan.2	Sunnyside-Ont.Place	(few)	
Glaucous Gull	Dec.21-Jan.2	Ont.Place-Humber B.	(1-2)	m.ob.
	Dec.26	Bluffer's		KF
	Jan.4	Port Credit	(4)	IT
Great Black-backed Gull	Frequent	Lake	(up to 6 at once)	m.ob.

## DOVES THROUGH OWLS:

Rock Dove	Dec.19	N.end of Grenadier P.	(100 on wire & 80 in a nearby tree)	BJ
Mourning Dove	Jan.12	Claireville	(35)	IT
Great Horned Owl	Frequent	Spit, W.Deane, Centennial Pk., Humber M.7, Don Valley, Lynde shores, Oakville)		m.ob.
		(11 reported)		
Long-eared Owl	Frequent	Spit, Island, Humber M7, Claireville, Oakville, High Pk., Brimley/St.Clair	(7 reported, & each seems to be alone.)	m.ob.
Short-eared Owl	Dec.24-Jan.5	Humber B.	(1-2)	m.ob.
	Dec.20-31	Spit	(1-2, calling to each other on Dec.31)	DP
Northern Saw-whet Owl	Jan.9	Humber M.5		BW
	Jan.11	Ford Dr.&Upper Middle Rd.		SPNC

## KINGFISHERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS:

Belted Kingfisher	Jan.12	Richmond Hill	(open stream)	HT
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Early Jan.	Glendon		m.ob.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Jan.15	James Gardens		CG
Downy Woodpecker	Common	City trees		m.ob.
Hairy Woodpecker	Frequent	Parks	(more being observed this year)	m.ob.
Northern Flicker	Uncommon	Willowdale, W.Deane, Lambton Woods		

## TORONTO REGION BIRD RECORDS (cont'd)

## LARKS THROUGH KINGLETS:

Horned Lark	Dec.28	Bolton	(25)	BW
	Jan.4	Lakeview Generating Station	(5)	IT
Blue Jay	Common	Feeders	(1-3)	m.ob.
American Crow	Common	Harassing owls & hawks		m.ob.
Black-capped Chickadee	Abundant	Feeders	(1-5)	
		Wooded Parks	(flocks)	m.ob.
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Few	High Pk. & Feeders		m.ob.
White-breasted Nuthatch	Common	Feeders & Woods		m.ob.
Brown Creeper	Dec.21-Jan.11	W.Metro Pks.&Oakville	(4 reported)	m.ob.
Golden-crowned Kinglet	Jan.8	High Pk.	(few)	SP
		Lambton Woods	(11)	IT

## THRUSHES THROUGH STARLINGS:

Hermit Thrush	Dec.24-Jan.1	Marlborough Fl.	(not accepting any offerings)	LM
	Jan.	Walmer Rd.	(eating a mixture of suet & fruit at a feeder)	PW
	Jan.11	Lambton Woods		IT
American Robin	Dec.25	Windfield Pk.	(-9°C, in gorgeous plumage)	JP
		Few winter residents:	High Pk., Lynde Shores, Lambton(6)	m.ob.
Bohemian Waxwing	Jan.11	L.Wilcox	(with 17 Cedar Waxwings)	HB
	Jan.15	Lambton Woods Area	(with 16 Cedar Waxwings, in junipers)	C&JG, 60
Cedar Waxwing	Occasional	Rosedale, W.Deane, Windfield Pk., etc.	(flocks of 8-20)	m.ob.
Northern Shrike	Occasional	Brampton, L.Wilcox (resident), Lambton, Claireville, High Pk.		m.ob.
European Starling	"Always around"	"all 'civilized' areas"		m.ob.
	Jan.1	Todmorden	(100-1000 roosting in oaks & big silver maples)	TFN
	Jan.11	Downtown	(eating pizza, especially enjoying the cheese)	H&AJ

## CARDINALS THROUGH COWBIRDS

Northern Cardinal	Common	Feeders		m.ob.
American Tree Sparrow	Dec.17	Humber Arboretum	(1)	DS
	Jan.8	"	(6)	DS
	Jan.12	Claireville	(12)	IT
		Frequent	Outside Metro	m.ob.
	But Dec.29	Brimley&St.Clair	(2)	KF
Song Sparrow		Few remaining:	Don Valley, W.Deane, Lambton, High Pk.	m.ob.
White-throated Sparrow	Dec.21-Jan.15	Downtown	(eating nightshade & pishing loudly)	HJ
	Dec.22	Brimley & St.Clair	(feeder)	KF
Dark-eyed Junco	Frequent	Feeders	(4-14 daily)	m.ob.
Snow Bunting	Occasional	Humber B.	(11-22)	m.ob.
	Jan.4	Lakeview Generating Stn.	(13)	IT
Common Grackle	Dec.27	Near High Pk.	(feeder)	BW
Brown-headed Cowbird	Dec.19	"	"	BW
	Dec.22	Brimley & St.Clair	"	KF

## FINCHES AND HOUSE SPARROW:

Pine Grosbeak	Frequent this winter:	High Pk., Rosedale, Finch & Leslie, Lynde Shores, James Gardens, etc.	(1-12)	m.ob.
Purple Finch	Late Dec.	Willowdale & Mississauga	(feeders 2-14)	m.ob.
House Finch	Occasional	Mt.Pleasant & Lambton	(feeders 4-7)	m.ob.
Common Redpoll	Jan.5	Lynde Shores	(1000s: 25sec to pass by, 50' above open field)	BW
		"More this year in scattered locations":	Claireville, Bronte, James Gdns., Finch & Leslie	(3-30)
Pine Siskin	Occasional	Lambton Woods	(10-25)	BW, IT
American Goldfinch	"	" & High Pk.	(up to 50 at LW feeder)	m.ob.
		"	(up to 20)	IT
Evening Grosbeak	"	"	(up to 20)	BW, IT

## TORONTO REGION BIRD RECORDS (cont'd)

House Sparrow

"Not quite so common" "around houses" &amp; feeders m.ob.

▷ The next report will cover the period Jan. 16 to Feb. 15. Please send your observations before Feb. 21 to Beth Jefferson, 41 Lake Shore Dr., Apt. 404 New Toronto, Ont., MBV 1Z3, or telephone 251-2998 before 9:30 p.m.

Beth Jefferson

□

## LAKE ONTARIO MID-WINTER WATERFOWL INVENTORY

ROUTE → ↓ SPECIES	PORT HOPE	DURHAM	1	T 2	O 3	R 4	O 5	N 6	T 7	O	SUB-TOTAL	HAMI-LTON	NIAG-ARA	TOTAL
Common Loon												2		2
Horned Grebe												2		2
D.C. Cormorant												2		2
Trumpeter Swan			1								1			1
Tundra Swan								1			1			1
Mute Swan				4				2	27	26	59	26		85
Snow Goose								1			1			1
Canada Goose		450	3,115	123	20	57	201	955	1,941	6,412	1,579	91		8,532
Wood Duck						1	1				2			2
G.-wing. Teal		2										12		14
Am. Black Duck	8	210	239	48	4	3	31	52	120	497	481	3		1,199
Mallard	310	424	821	125	197	254	840	478	997	3,712	1,510	227		6,183
N. Pintail		3	1								1	41		45
Gadwall				1	240	2	30	43	68	384	32	12		428
A. Wigeon								12			12			12
Canvasback						13					13			13
Redhead				1		4	6	38	119	168	2			170
Gr. Scaup	27	240	212	15	17	38	185	843	480	1,790	1,922	1,630		5,609
Less. Scaup		2	2			2		2		6	220	5		233
Harlequin Duck												1		1
Oldsquaw	31	4		60	724	1,340	210	258	4	2,596	22	1,565		4,218
Surf Scoter												1		1
W.-wing. Scoter												31		31
Com. Goldeneye	298	141	106	47	6	22	45	40	184	450	123	279		1,291
Bufflehead	9	49	32	17	28	57	28	31	39	232	162	100		552
Hooded Merganser			1							1	11			12
Com. Merganser	27	23	68	20	20	17	18	58		201	26	113		390
Red-br. Merg.	7	3	5	32	20	25			1	83	35	19		147
Ruddy Duck								1		1				
TOTALS	717	1,551	4,603	493	1,276	1,835	1,597	2,840	3,979	16,623	6,244	4,044		29,179

## LAKE ONTARIO MID-WINTER WATERFOWL INVENTORY (cont'd)

Date: Jan 5, 1986; (Hamilton - Jan. 11)

Routes and Observers:

Presqu'ile: not covered

Port Hope (Wesleyville to Wicklow): Willow Beach Field Naturalists--E.R. McDonald, B. Olsen

Durham (Whitby to Wesleyville): Durham Field Naturalists--M. Bain, D. Ruch

Toronto area (Whitby to Rouge River): R. Nisbet, M. Wilson, C. & L. Weseloh

Routes (Rouge River to Coatsworth Cut): A. Dobson, B. Falls, R. Tasker

1 to 7 (Leslie St. to Cherry Beach): B. Parker, B. Jefferson

(Toronto Islands): G. Coady, W. Edmunds

(Parliament to Humber): K. Carmichael, S. Kelly

(Humber to Watersedge Park): D. Perks

(Clarkson to Bronte): C.E. & J.E. Goodwin, P. & G. Joiner

Hamilton (Bronte to 50 Point): Hamilton Naturalists--W. Lamond, D. Gardner,

M. Jennings, R. Ludkin, K. McLaughlin, W. Smith

Niagara (50 Point to Niagara-on-the-Lake): Peninsula Field Naturalists--G. Bell-

erby, J. Black, M.E. Foley, B. Mitchell, C. Sanderson, C. Smith

Time and Weather:

8:00 am to 4:00 pm; lake and Windermere Basin open; Toronto Bay partly open;

most other inland waters and rivers mainly frozen. Island lagoons frozen;

-10°C; sunny; snow squalls, lake choppy; visibility good; wind 30 kph NW

Compilers: Clive E. and Joy E. Goodwin

□

... The private automobile...exact an enormous and hidden price from society. Not only the individual car owner, but every member of society pays the price in terms of air, water, and soil pollution, with attendant increases in cancer, respiratory disease, and in lead poisoning among children, through the cost of constructing and maintaining roads, and through the perpetuation of a settlement pattern that drains the nation's resources. The failure to compute the whole cost of the automobile has contributed to the proliferation of a dispersed settlement pattern dependent upon private transportation, an urban form requiring the burning of more fuel with the attendant production of more wastes. It is a settlement pattern difficult to serve by public transportation, and therefore perpetuates private transportation modes. If owners were required to pay the full social cost of their automobiles there would be greater incentive for the exploration of alternative power sources or transportation types, which would in turn produce different patterns of land use than we see today, perhaps an older, vital urban core surrounded by a constellation of densely settled smaller centers, all connected by an efficient system of rail or bus.

from THE GRANITE GARDEN -- URBAN NATURE AND HUMAN DESIGN by Anne Whiston Spirn, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1984

## ISSUES

WILL BACKUS WOODS BECOME THE FIRST "CANADIAN LANDMARK"?

Since 1980 TFN has been a member of the Backus Group, a committee of representatives from the Long Point Conservation Authority, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the University of Toronto, and various naturalist organizations. The group has been concerned about the "management" of Backus woods near Long Point. This remnant forest is the best example in the world of the northern type of Carolinian deciduous forest. If allowed to reach its potential, many of the trees could grow to be a thousand years old. It is definitely of heritage calibre.

On January 18, 1986, members of the Backus Group voted unanimously in favour of asking Mr. Tom McMillan, Federal Minister of the Environment, to present Backus Woods to the Cabinet as a candidate for designation as the first CANADIAN LANDMARK.

The Long Point Conservation Authority who has owned the woods since 1956 is expecting compensation for loss of revenue from planned timber harvest.

The landmark easement or acquisition is expected to be a cooperative effort of the Conservation Authority, the local municipal government, the provincial and federal governments and the private sector.

Members who want to support this praiseworthy initiative should encourage this effort by writing letters to the following:

▷ The Honourable Vincent Kerrio, Ontario Minister of Natural Resources,  
Whitney Block, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1W3

▷ The Honourable Thomas McMillan, Minister of the Environment, Environment  
Canada, 28th floor, Le Terrace de Chaudiere, 10 Wellington St., Hull,  
P.Q. K1A 0H3

Mary Smith

Ed. Note. Copies of inventory studies of the insects, mammals, herptiles, small mammals, amphibians and reptiles, vegetation and recommendations regarding birds may be borrowed from TFN.

BUDWORM SPRAYING TO INCREASE SHARPLY DESPITE PEST DECLINE

Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources plans a big increase in the aerial spraying of budworms in Northwestern Ontario forests this spring, despite a dramatic drop in the insect's population. Natural Resources Minister Vincent Kerrio unveiled a \$9.2-million proposal to spray 370,000 hectares of northeastern forests to combat an infestation of spruce and jackpine budworm -- a 68% increase over the 220,000 hectares treated last year. Data from the Canadian Forestry Service show, however, that the spruce budworm population in Northeastern Ontario, based on egg-mass counts, has dropped 75% from last year and the jackpine budworm has dropped 48%. This year the Liberal Government proposes to use Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), a bacterial insecticide, and two man-made chemical insecticides, Fenitrothion and Matacil. The Ministry is inviting public comment on its proposals.

condensed from the GLOBE AND MAIL, Jan. 22, 1986

▷ For further information or to comment, write to the Honourable Vincent Kerrio,  
Ontario Minister of Natural Resources, Whitney Block, Queen's park, Toronto  
Ontario M7A 1W3. ▷

ISSUES (cont'd)

OSHAWA SECOND MARSH

The Oshawa Second Marsh could be available as an exceptional wetland area and a habitat for wildlife. It was originally sold by the City of Oshawa to the Department of Transport for harbour expansion which never took place. A task force has recommended in favour of preserving the Marsh. By a provision of the original deed, Oshawa City Council can regain ownership. All it needs to do is negotiate with the Harbour Commission and/or the Department of Transport, but there seems to be a reluctance to act. Environment Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources are also prepared to discuss settling the ownership question and saving the Marsh.

Write to Mayor Allan Pilkey  
and Oshawa City Council, c/o City Clerk, Oshawa City Hall, 50 Centre Street  
South, Oshawa L1H 3Z7.

PARK PLAN OFFERED FOR SOUTH MORESBY

Parks Canada has proposed that South Moresby, the focus of a bitter debate over logging in the Queen Charlotte Islands, become a national park reserve to protect it while Haida Indian land claims are negotiated. Federal Environment Minister Thomas McMillan has broached the idea of a reserve -- instead of a full-fledged park -- with B.C. officials and the Haida, and the Indians have said they want more talks. Haida spokesman Ernie Collison said park reserve status might fit in with "our primary issue -- aboriginal title".

from the GLOBE AND MAIL, Jan. 11, 1986

SOUTH MORESBY ISLANDS

The Canadian Nature Federation is organizing the "Save South Moresby Caravan". This will be a bus and train pilgrimage from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Vancouver to capture national attention for the fight to save South Moresby from logging.

Watch for it! (between March 5 and March 15). Talk about it! Support it!  
Write to the Premier of British Columbia (The Hon. W. R. Bennett, Premier's  
Office, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. V8V 4R3).

LESLIE STREET EXTENSION AND BAYVIEW EXTENSION WIDENING

North York is holding an OPEN HOUSE at the Civic Garden Centre on Wednesday, February 26 from 2 pm to 9 pm. Your opportunity to comment.

## MORNING

The sparrows are pegged  
Along the clothesline,  
Swinging gently to and from,  
Holding on to little else  
Than their equilibrium.

Karen Parker

# IN THE NEWS

ISRAEL AND THE BIRDS VIE FOR PRECIOUS AIR SPACE: "A young Israeli fighter pilot ran into a bird that was migrating south. It crashed through his front windshield and somehow activated the ejection lever next to the pilot's seat. Fortunately his parachute opened automatically and he woke up on the ground. We sent some of the blood and feathers we found in his cockpit to a police laboratory in Holland, and they told us he was hit by a honey buzzard."

Since the mid-1970's migrating buzzards, storks, pelicans and eagles have done more damage to Israeli fighter jets than all the Arab air forces combined. A two-pound stork hits a fighter jet flying at about 500 miles per hour with a force of 20 tons. In hundreds of jet-bird collisions each year, Israeli planes sustain millions of dollars of damage in cracked and punctured wings, destroyed engines - and worse. The severity of the problem derives from Israel's unique geographical and political predicament: It is a tiny country with very little air space, maintaining one of the world's biggest air forces in what happens to be the main corridor for storks, pelicans and raptors - predatory birds - migrating from Europe and Asia to Africa and back every spring and fall.

The Air Force sought assistance from the country's devoted bird-watchers, many of whom are Arabs. Working together, the bird-watchers and the Air Force are developing one of the most sophisticated programs ever produced to reduce jet-bird collisions. The dimensions of the bird problem facing Israeli Air Force pilots were enormous. Every fall, as the food supply dwindles, millions of birds of all species migrate from their nesting places in Europe and western Asia to their wintering grounds in Africa. The smaller, "active flyers" like quails or waders, are so light they can cross the Mediterranean by flapping their wings in one tiring day. The bigger birds, known as "passive flyers" primarily raptors and storks and pelicans, have to take an overland route for two reasons: First, they must land each night to rest, and second, with their heavy bodies and wide, long wings, they glide their way to Africa on the warm air currents, known as thermals, which are produced only over land. If the birds had to beat their wings for the whole 5,000 to 6,000 mile journey, they would never make it.

The birds make their way by gliding into a rising thermal of warm air and riding its swirling spiral up to about 2,000 to 4,000 feet, where the air cools and the thermal expires. The birds glide down from the top of one thermal to the bottom of the next one and repeat the process all the way down to Africa and back. The narrow valleys flanked by cliffs running from northern Israel through the Jordan River and Dead Sea, as well as along Israel's coastal plain, are ideal hothouses for rising thermals and they serve as the two main aviation highways for most European and West Asian raptors

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## IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

looking for the shortest route around the Mediterranean. Since Biblical days it has been known that certain birds pass over Israel at roughly the same time every year, hence the line in Jeremiah 8:7 - "even the stork in the heavens knows her appointed time; the turtledove, swallow and crane observe the time of their coming." Jeremiah notwithstanding, no one really knew how many birds were migrating over Israel and through which air corridors. To find out, the Israel Raptor Information Centre in 1981 began training volunteer bird watchers at 13 points all over the country to count birds and identify species.

One of the best observation posts turned out to be the Arab village of Kfar Qassem, northeast of Tel Aviv, and the local villagers quickly got into the act. What they soon discovered was that more birds were coming over Israel than anyone imagined - one million birds of prey alone during each spring and fall. More important, each species was coming at almost the same time and through the same air corridors every year. For instance, on Sept. 4, 1984, and on Sept. 4, 1985, the honey buzzards began their parade over Israel, an estimated 220,000 of them in two days. When the birds start coming they are a remarkable sight, swirling around in thermals of sometimes 5,000 birds at a time, and then gliding in pairs or three or four across to the next thermal as though on their way to Noah's ark.

But the bird watcher's delight was a pilot's nightmare, particularly after Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in 1982 and lost the Air Force's best training area. It was discovered that the jet-bird collisions since the late 1970's were all happening along two basic north-south corridors. These areas were declared "Bird Plagued Zones" and pilots were instructed to avoid flying in them below 3,000 feet. With the early information the bird watchers produced, aided by radar and observation from a light aircraft, the Air Force was able to greatly refine its Bird Plagued Zones - called "Bird Protected Zones" by the bird watchers - and to activate them on the right dates at the right altitudes. Since June 1983 jet-bird collisions have been reduced by roughly half, with no serious accidents.

The bird watchers now serve as an early warning system for the air force. This spring, for example, the Israeli air force had scheduled a major training mission. The night before a report was received from a bird watcher that a large number of raptors had settled for the night near Mt. Tabor. The air force was alerted to postpone the mission for another day. For Israel's bird watchers, the support of the Air Force has enabled them to identify and protect the 475 different species flying through Israel - so many birds that the International Council for Bird Preservation, the leading bird conservation organization in the world, has decided to hold its quadrennial convention in Eilat in March 1987.

▷

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

The Israeli Air Force has a slogan, which has been printed on a poster that now hangs in every Israeli air base. The poster shows a fighter plane flying next to a steppe eagle and says, "Take Care, We Share the Air."

(condensed from an article by T. L. Friedman in the NEW YORK TIMES, September 17, 1985)

#### NEW SOFT DRINK CONTAINER REGULATIONS

The Ministry of the Environment has announced a major funding program of \$2.5 million a year to municipalities, industry and voluntary organizations for the expanding of household waste recycling. Hamilton will be the home base for the Recycling Advisory Committee which will promote recycling of materials including glass, plastic, metals and newsprint.

Under new regulations, distributors must maintain a ratio of 40% refillable bottles. Aluminum pop cans will be made legal after September 1987. It is estimated that, aluminum being a considerably more valuable reclaimable material than the presently used steel, this move will reduce the flow of waste to landfill sites by as much as 15%.

By encouraging the recycling of domestic waste alongside the enforcement of refillable and recyclable containers, Jim Bradley, the Minister of the Environment, hopes to stabilize the soft drink industry in Ontario while reducing solid waste by recovery and recycling.

▷ For further information, write to the Hon. James Bradley, Minister of the Environment, 15th floor, 135 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto. M4V 1P5.

Condensed from a news release of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, December 10, 1985.

#### CAMPAIGN AIMS TO END TRADE IN FROGS' LEGS

The slaughter of frogs across Asia to satisfy the palates of European gourmets has angered ecologists and triggered a campaign by the World Wildlife Fund to end the trade in frogs' legs. West German animal protection societies have joined enthusiastically in the Fund's Save the Frog campaign, while in Asia ecologists say farmers who cash in on the slaughter are killing their own best friend. In Bangladesh, one of the world's biggest supplies of frogs' legs, the government has banned the hunting of frogs during the April to July breeding season after recognizing their role in the battle against agricultural pests. Frogs eat close to their own body weight in insects and other crop pests each day. They also control insects which carry malaria and encephalitis. In China, where frogs have traditionally been a popular part of cuisine, an official ban on their sale has been imposed and the amphibians are now regarded as playing an essential role in the ecological control of pests.

condensed from an article in the GLOBE AND MAIL, Nov. 5, 1985

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# projects

## "GIVE A HOOT, SPONSOR AN OWL"

The Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation sponsors a program which operates a centre for the care and breeding of injured native owls at Vineland, Ontario. The centre is managed by Kay and Larry McKeever, international authorities on owl rehabilitation, breeding and behavioral research, and is the leading facility of its kind in North America.

Under the program, donors can contribute to the "board and keep" of one or more of 15 different species of owls. Sponsorships range from \$50.00 to \$200.00 a year. Donations are tax-deductible.

▷ For more information about this program, write to The Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation, R.R. 1, Vineland Station, Ontario. L0R 2E0.

## COLOUR-BANDED HOUSE FINCHES

The Ontario Bird Banding Association has colour-banded House Finches from Kingston to St. Thomas in an attempt to determine whether a certain age or sex makes the initial move to new areas, and when such pioneering occurs.

▷ If you see a House Finch with colour-bands, please report the date, location and details of colour-band on each leg to: Bird Banding Office, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0E7.

## INTERGENERATIONAL TEACHING-LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN EAST YORK

Grandpersons Needed Here!

Are you a senior citizen with one afternoon a week to share with a child your interest in the wonders of nature?

Intergenerational Teaching-Learning Communities in East York brings together senior citizens, called Grandpersons, and elementary school children in a school setting to share life interests or simple craft skills and to foster a relationship which bridges the generations.

▷ If you are interested in establishing a friendly and caring relationship with a small group of children while encouraging them to be more aware of the world around them, contact Lois Scott at 421-2990, and ask for more information about IT-LC.

All materials and tools are provided by IT-LC. Transportation if required can be arranged.

## 1986 JUNIOR CONSERVATIONIST AWARD PROGRAM

The Junior Conservationist Award Program (J.C.A.P.) is co-ordinated by the Conservation Authorities and Water Management Branch of the Ministry of Natural Resources, for young people ages 16 to 18 years, who have demonstrated an active interest in conservation and resource management. Participants work in groups on a project for one of Ontario's 38 Conservation Authorities. The projects range from small watershed studies with recommendations for future management, to the development of teachers' guides and/or brochures. The participants receive room and board and a nominal living allowance of \$10 per day.

▷ Applications for this program must be post-marked no later than April 1, 1986. For further information contact: Mrs. S. Court, Special Employment Co-ordinator, Conservation Authorities and Water Management Branch, Room 5620, Whitney Block, Queen's Park, Toronto. M7A 1W3.

## PROJECTS (cont'd)

SAVE THE ROUGE VALLEY SYSTEM
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1. The recently-established Rouge Valley Foundation has 5 openings on its Board of Directors. Experience is welcome in business accounting, planning, architecture, biology, resource management, education, arts, finance, engineering, geography, law, and related fields.
2. The Foundation also requires a secretary to deal with minutes, correspondence, etc. Foundation meetings will initially be weekly, then monthly.
3. The Rouge Valley Resource Centre needs volunteers in the library, one day or half-day weekly, to assist in the ordering and management of books, reports, maps, photos, slides, displays, correspondence files, newsletters and art materials. The Centre is located in West Rouge Public School, 401 Friendship Avenue, Scarborough (near 401 and Port Union Road, 2 blocks from a Rouge Hills bus). Entrance can be arranged with the caretaker who is on duty from 8.00 a.m. to 11.00 p.m.
4. Save the Rouge Valley System, a citizen-based conservation group, needs volunteers to take slide-tape programs into school classes, youth groups and community groups, on request. Two programs have been developed, and those interested could prepare additional material under Rouge Valley Foundation sponsorship.

▷ For further information on all of the above, telephone S.R.V.S. secretary, Lois James, 284-6409, or write R.R. 1, Markham, Ontario. L3P 3J2.

RESEARCH ON ACID RAIN

▷ Professor Harold Harvey (speaker at the TFN meeting, December 1985) is conducting research on acid rain. He would appreciate receiving reports on lakes where fish are decreasing and acid rain is suspected. Dr. Harvey's address is:  
 Department of Zoology, University of Toronto,  
 25 Harbord Street, Toronto, Ontario. M5S 1A1

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CITY TREES

For anyone who might be skeptical about the idea of trees providing an important presence within our environment, there is an easy test that can be performed. Simply compare an area of your city or town where there are no trees or only very young trees (such as is often found in newly developed housing areas) with areas where there are many older, stately trees. You will quickly discover that the treeless areas often seem somewhat bleak and joyless while the areas abundant with older trees usually present an atmosphere of serenity, solidity and even of vitality and abundance. Real estate values also tend to reflect these differences for they are almost always higher in those sectors of the city that are populated with large trees.

from TREES, GUARDIANS OF THE EARTH by Donald J. Nichol, the Lorian Association, P.O. Box 147, Middleton, WI 53562, 1983

# IN EXCHANGE

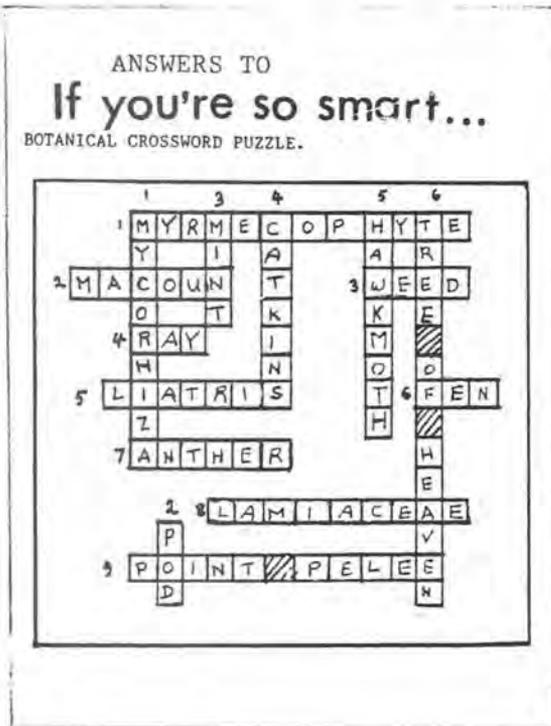
## SPRING HAWK MIGRATION

Since the spring of 1975, records have been kept of the hawks observed from Beamer Point at Grimsby. Below are totals for 1984.

Species Key: TV Turkey Vulture; GO Goshawk; SS Sharp-shinned Hawk;  
CH Cooper's Hawk; RT Red-tailed Hawk; RD Red-shouldered Hawk;  
BW Broad-winged Hawk; RL Rough-legged Hawk; GE Golden Eagle;  
BE Bald Eagle; NH Northern Harrier; OS Osprey; PG Peregrine  
Falcon; ML Merlin; AK American Kestrel; UID unidentified hawk

DATE	HOURS	TV	GO	SS	CH	RT	RS	BW	RL	GE	BE	NH	OS	ML	AK	UID	TOTAL
Feb. 19-26	10.4	1	-	-	-	244	4	-	4	1	-	4	-	-	-	-	258
March	151.0	46	31	15	35	1134	277	-	14	-	2	8	-	-	16	96	1674
April	232.8	529	33	3733	133	1592	552	7704	62	4	3	83	27	-	37	520	15012
May	170.4	40	3	935	22	135	5	140	5	1	-	32	11	2	3	24	1358
<hr/>																	
SEASON																	
TOTAL	564.6	616	67	4683	190	3105	838	7844	85	6	5	127	38	2	56	640	18302

from a chart in THE GRIMSBY HAWKWATCHER V.4 Apr.85  
contained in THE WOOD DUCK V.38 No. 8 Apr. 85



IN EXCHANGE (cont'd)

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 THE SOUTH PEEL CHRISTMAS CENSUS: 1953-1983
 

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 Mallard, Gadwall, and Black Duck
 

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Since its formation the SPNC has been conducting Christmas bird censuses during the specified two-week period surrounding Christmas along with hundreds of other groups and organizations in North America. The data collected from the Club's endeavours now span three decades. Eric Nasmith, who has been the data compiler for the SPNC censuses since 1965, has put together the Club's results for the thirty-one year period, and Madeline Richard is in the process of computerizing them. Our intention is to provide a permanent record for the Club archives as well as a data base for analysis. The following is an example of the kind of analysis that could be done.

Mallards and Black Ducks have been seen on every South Peel Count since 1953, but Gadwall have only been seen since 1966. Figures 1 and 2 graphically depict their numbers by year over the thirty-one-year period from 1953-1983. Figure 1 shows that the number of Gadwall has been increasing since 1966 with the most notable increases occurring in 1976, 1979, and 1982. It is interesting to note that in the years immediately following these highs there was a significant decline in the numbers seen on the count day.

Figure 2 reveals that Mallards and Black Ducks were relatively close in terms of numbers during the 1950s. In addition more Blacks were counted in 1953, 1957-1967, and from 1970-1972 than Mallards. From 1973 on, a significantly greater number of Mallards was seen relative to the number of Black Ducks, and like the Gadwall, peak years were followed by rather drastic declines in the numbers seen.

According to Bent(1923) and Kortright (1967) Gadwall and Mallard are primarily species of the western and central regions of North America. In addition, it is stated that the Mallard, while it is probably North America's most abundant species of duck, is "most prevalent in the west, giving place in the east to [its near relative] the Black Duck where historically it has been the most abundant". The data in Figures 1 and 2, however, seem to suggest that both the Gadwall and Mallard have been expanding their range at the expense of the Black Duck. Although both Bent and Kortright state that the Black Duck is a hardy species, the winter range of the Mallard suggests that it is even hardier. The Mallard, for example, is found in both Alaska and Greenland during the winter wherever there is open water.

An examination of the data for 1984 suggests another trend may be emerging. For the first time the number of Gadwall (611) exceeded the number of Mallards (514) on the day of the count. Should this trend continue, Gadwall would become more numerous than the Mallard in our area during the count period. It would not be surprising should this trend continue to emerge in light of the historical evidence which reveals that even though Mallards are abundant in the West, they do share the limelight with other species such as the Gadwall in terms of sheer numbers.

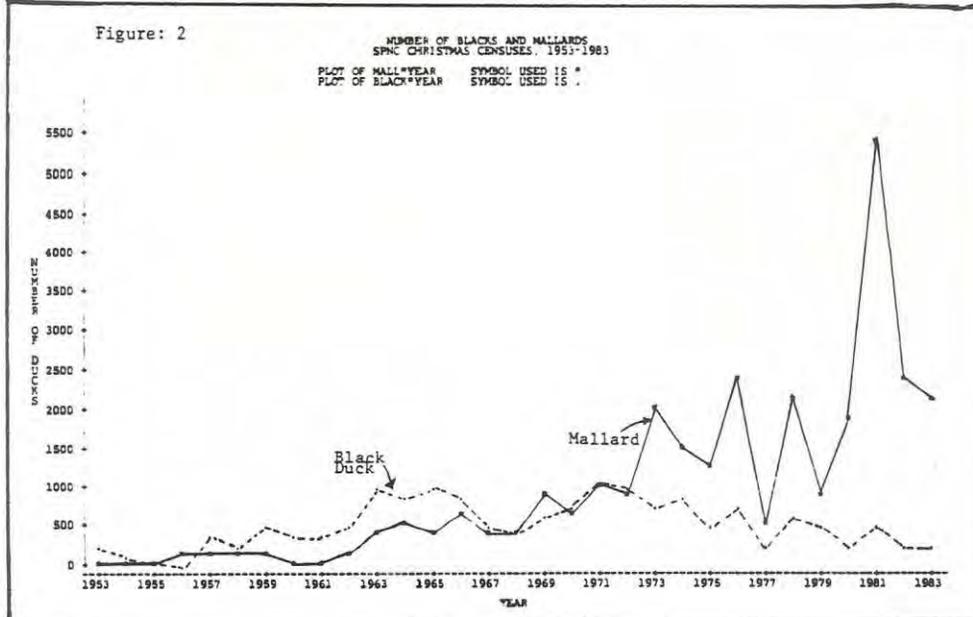
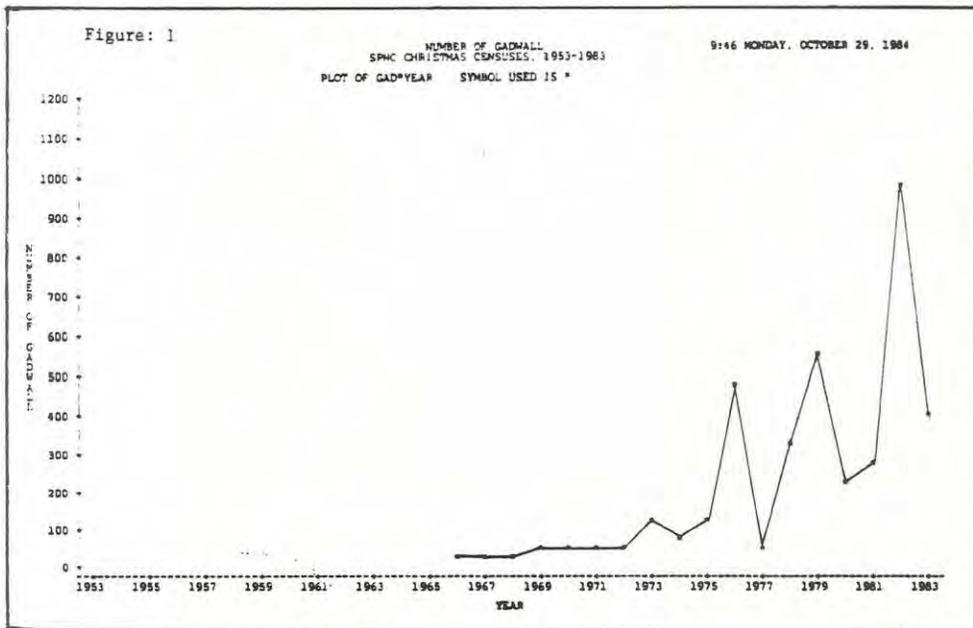
Of the three species it would appear that Gadwall are the least dependent on wetlands for breeding habitat. It may be that the drainage of wetlands that has been occurring in the eastern regions of North America is contributing to the demise of the Black Duck which must now compete with the Mallard for the shrinking number of nesting sites. ▷

IN EXCHANGE (cont'd)

In summation, South Peel Count data for 1953-1983 reveal an increase in the number of Mallards and Gadwall over the years, and relative to the Mallard a decline in the number of Black Ducks since 1972, a trend which continued in 1984 when only 199 were seen. It appears that the reason for these trends is due in part to the intrusion of the Mallard and Gadwall into the range of the Black Duck which must now compete with both species. The data appear to support this theory in that at about the time Gadwall and Mallards begin to show significant increases, i.e. 1973, the number of Black Ducks begins its more general trend toward decline. In addition, it appears that the Mallard may be challenged by the Gadwall for numerical superiority in the very near future.

Eric Nasmith and Madeline Richard

Ref. Bent, Arthur Cleveland 1923 LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN WILDFOWL Part 1 of the U.S. National Museum Bulletin 126 [repr. Dover New York]  
 Kortright, Francis H. 1967 THE DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS OF NORTH AMERICA The Stackpole Co. Harrisburg Pa. & Wildlife Management Inst. Washington DC  
 from SOUTH PEEL NATURALISTS' CLUB BULLETIN January 1985.



HICKORIES AT THE EDGE

In Ontario the Carolinian or deciduous forest zone occurs in a narrow region south of an imaginary concave crescent drawn from Grand Bend on Lake Huron to approximately the mouth of the Rouge River. We in Toronto are fortunate to be able to see fragments of this habitat in our area. The most easily accessible remnant of the Carolinian zone occurs in High Park with its sassafras and black oak trees.

Although the shagbark hickory is found within the Carolinian zone, it is not exclusively a Carolinian species and may be found scattered among the trees of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence zone. (See range map.) The hickories east of Toronto constitute a separate population.

In 1985, I led two TFN outings to view the hickories in the Thorncliffe/Laird Drive area of the Don Valley. The outing on March 10 was to see the hickories without their leaves when it is easier to spot one's favourite trees. One of the trees we saw has extremely interesting bark. It is not in flaky strips as is usual for a shagbark hickory, but in a criss-cross pattern. I wonder if it could be a hybrid of our two hickories -- shagbark and bitternut? I saw three such trees on the east side of the Hudson River near Tarrytown, N.Y., though no bitternut hickories were seen in the area. We saw many excellent shagbark hickories on our March outing.

On the August 25 outing we identified shagbarks by their bark and bud and their compound leaves. It was disappointing that the shagbarks were not fruiting. Perhaps last year's bumper crop meant that this was a "rest" year for the trees. A four to five-year-old sapling was discovered as well as a number of large trees.

On December 31, 1985, I took a short walk to explore part of the East Don River Valley (just upstream from the forks of the Don). Because I am particularly interested in shagbark hickories, I was pleased to find a single stem of one on the south bank of the East Don, just east of where the Don Valley Parkway crosses this branch of the Don. (Previously, the farthest "out" I had been able to locate a shagbark in Toronto was off Thorncliffe Park Drive at the entrance to Ernest Thompson Seton Park.) The stem I found was two metres tall and one cm dbh. It appeared to be occurring naturally and was surrounded by a stand of at least 15 black walnuts, the largest about 30 cm dbh. (Other black walnuts in the area grow on the west-facing slope on the Parkway side of Stinson Circle and Welby Circle.) Also growing nearby were examples of American or Canadian yew.

I have grown shagbark hickories from seed taken from these Don Valley trees. Anyone interested in seeing the trees, talking about trees, or wanting to see my tree collection may call me at 449-7907 (after 7 pm).

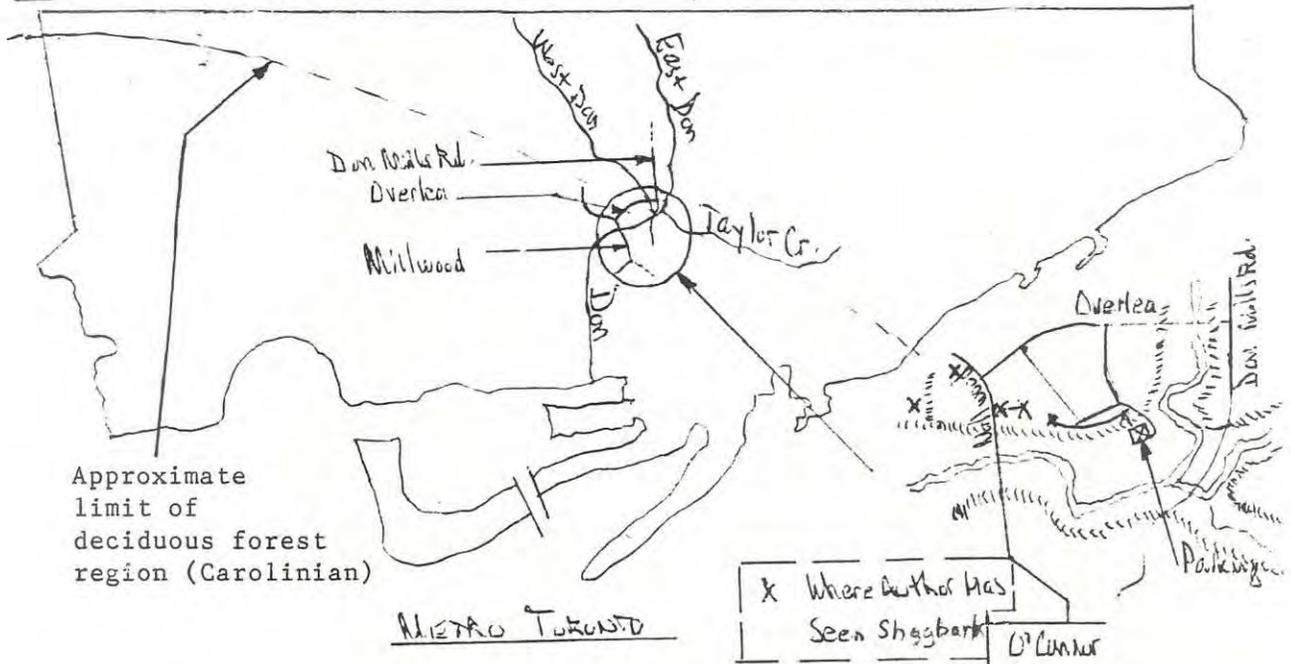
Tom Atkinson



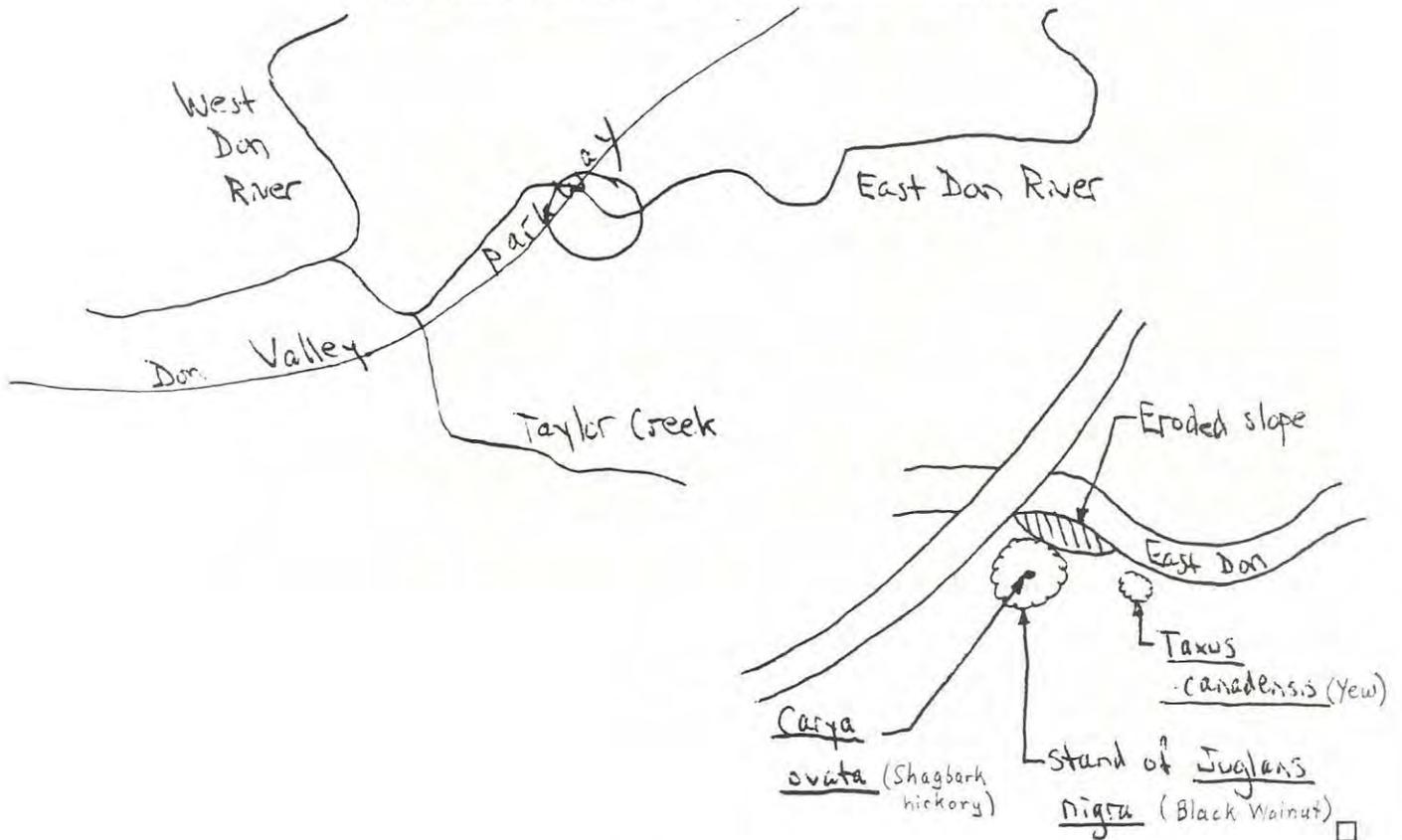
■ ONTARIO RANGE OF Shagbark

HICKORIES AT THE EDGE (cont'd)

Shagbark hickories in the West Don Valley



Shagbark hickories in the East Don Valley



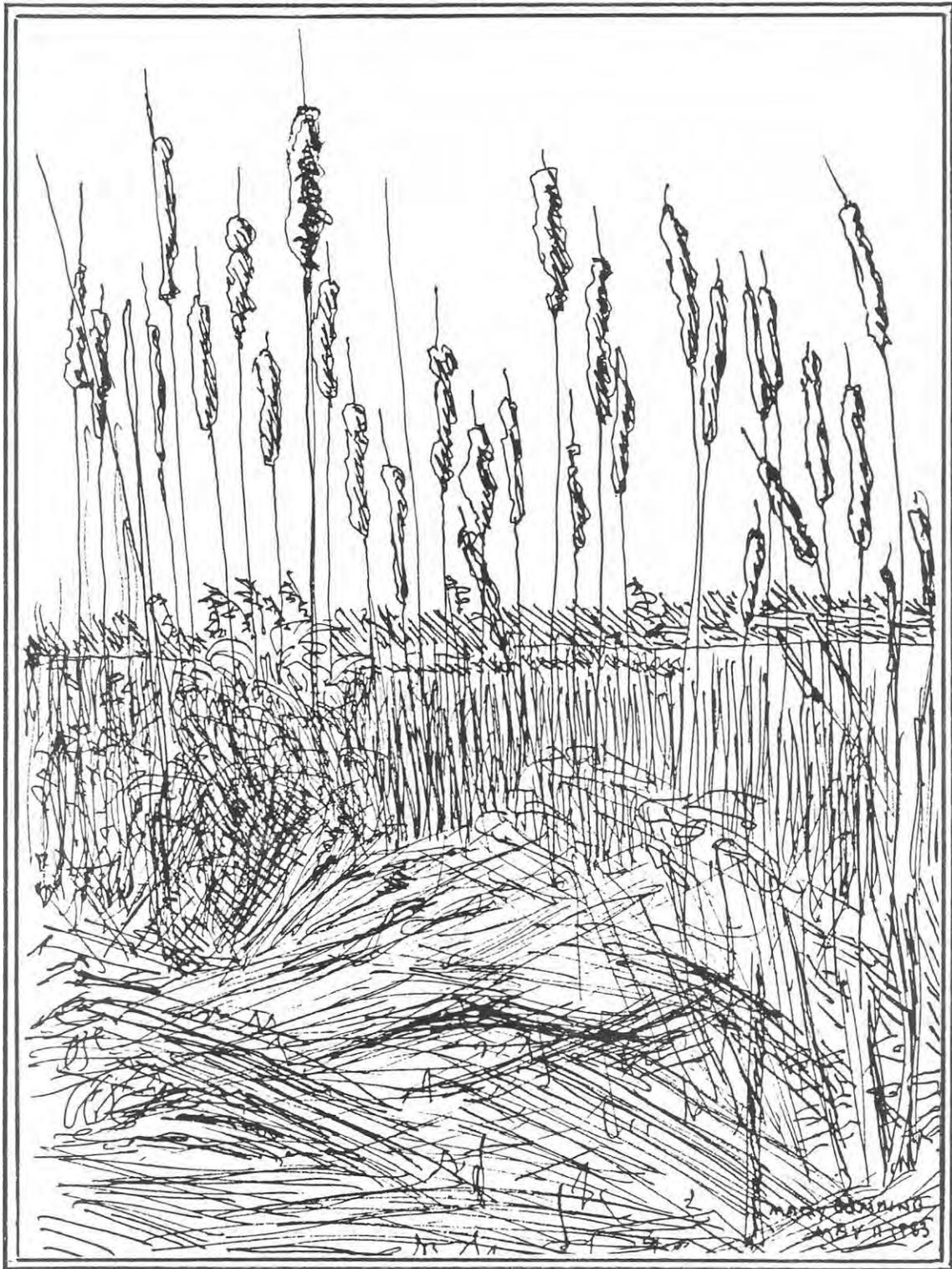
# A Naturalist's Code of Ethics

## DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR CANADIAN WILDFLOWER SOCIETY CODE OF ETHICS

1. Members recognize the prime necessity to preserve natural habitat and will not engage in activities which are detrimental to native plant communities.
2. Members will acquire native plants, seeds, cuttings, and root divisions from garden or nursery stock and via the CWS seed exchange, in preference to transplants from the wild.
3. Members should use plant materials which have originated in their immediate floristic region. Such plants and seeds are best adapted to the local climate, soil and predators.
4. Members should give preference to regionally native plant species in their gardens, rather than naturalized or exotic species. The latter group may escape to wild habitats and interfere with the growth and spread of native flora.
5. Members should promote the cultivation and propagation of regionally native plants as an educational and conservation measure to supplement the preservation of natural habitat.
6. Members should keep accurate records of any regionally rare flora which they are growing to increase our understanding of the biology of the species.
7. Transplanting of wild native flora is only condoned when the plants of a given area are officially slated for destruction, e.g., construction of roads, subdivisions, pipelines, golf courses, etc. Large plant rescue operations should be approved beforehand by the CWS Board of Directors and appropriate records kept.
8. No more than 10% of a seed crop should be collected from the wild. The remainder must be left for natural dispersal and as food for dependent organisms.
9. Members should use natural means of fertilizing the soil, controlling predators and eliminating 'weeds', rather than synthetic chemical means.
10. Members should give consideration to planting native species which are attractive to native fauna, especially those birds, butterflies, and moths which are regionally uncommon.
11. Members will exercise extreme caution when studying and photographing wildflowers in order not to damage the immediate and surrounding flora and fauna.
12. Members should co-operate, where possible, with arboreta, botanical gardens and university departments of biology and environmental studies in the propagation and study of regionally rare plant species.
13. Members will openly share their botanical knowledge with the public, so long as such sharing will not endanger native plant species or communities.

All members and non-members of the Canadian Wildflower Society are invited to comment on this proposed code of ethics. The final approved code will be published in the Winter 1986 issue of WILDFLOWER. Please send your comments to: CWS, 35 Bauer Crescent, Unionville, Ontario L3R 4H3, before December 30, 1986.

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The Wetlands at Pickering - field sketch by Mary Cumming

THE SWALLOWS

WHERE HAVE THEY BEEN?

The chart gives a general idea of the winter latitudes reached by our six species of swallow. Some "casuals" may be found north of these ranges. The east-west boundaries vary for each species. In South America three species regularly winter east of the Andes - still each has a very broad range; the barn swallow is listed "throughout". Those species which winter the farthest north - the tree swallow and rough-winged - have narrower ranges, hugging coastlines and funnelling into the narrower land-masses, stopping short of South America.

HOW AND WHEN ARE THEY COMING BACK?

Some flocks like to island-hop through the West Indies and Bahamas to their breeding ranges in the United States and Canada. Only the purple martin and cliff swallow are not partial to this route. Other flocks of all six species migrate through or along the coasts of Central America and Mexico. Four species in fact breed also in Mexico, and the rough-winged extends its breeding range well into Central America. It's only the tree swallow and bank swallow which are not listed as breeding south of the Rio Grande.

By March 1 most migrating swallows will not have reached the United States; tree swallows will be starting to arrive at the Gulf Coast to join those which have wintered there. By April 1 the swallows will be moving up through the southern U. S. or in from U.S. coasts. All six species nest in Toronto. The tree swallows (which have such a head-start) will be arriving first - in early or mid-April, followed by the purple martins, and still later in the month, by the barn swallow. The other three species should be here the first of May.

Diana Banville

Ref. BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA Golden Press (range maps) 1966  
 TORONTO REGION BIRD CHART by Bruce Parker, TFN 1983  
 CHECKLIST OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS A.O.U. 1983

REGULAR NORTH-SOUTH WINTER RANGE OF SIX SWALLOW SPECIES						
within Americas	Purple Martin	Tree Swallow	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Bank Swallow	Cliff Swallow	Barn Swallow
U. S.		New York	Gulf Coast			
MEXICO						Puerto Rico
WEST INDIES*						
CENTRAL AMERICA		Costa Rica		Panama		
SOUTH AMERICA	Colombia Brazil				Brazil Argentina Central	Tierra del Fuego
Based on Sixth Edition of American Ornithologists' Union Checklist of North American Birds.						
*Only tree and barn swallows are listed as wintering in the West Indies.						





BIRDS OF THE COTTAGE COUNTRY by William C. Mansell, illustrated by William Blair Mansell and Shelia Smith, McBain Publications, 70 Otonabee Drive, Kitchener N2C 1L6, 1985. 207 pages, \$7.95.

In this informal guide, the author tells of his experiences with over three hundred species of birds in Muskoka, Haliburton, and Parry Sound Districts, and in Algonquin Park, over many years. Each chapter is devoted to a family or group and starts with status codes for all species mentioned, followed by reminiscences and comments. Subject matter varies from one species to the next; the book is intended to be used as a supplement to the available field guides (which are listed) and to be enjoyed for its anecdotal style and humour. A systematic list with spring and fall arrival and departure dates for the general area covered is included. Nineteen species are illustrated in black and white drawings. There are no maps, bibliography, or index. However, there is some reference value, since throughout the book species are systematically arranged and their names shown in bold type in the text. Only English names are used.

Cottagers may like to have this little book around, to compare notes.

DB

THE LIVING BIRD QUARTERLY, AUTUMN 1985, Research and Review Column, by Richard E. Bonney Jr. "DDT in the 1980s...You may be using it in your yard". Reprinted from THE MIAMI HERALD.

This article is mostly concerned with the insecticide DICOFOL of which DDT is an ingredient. When the Environmental Protection Agency in the U.S. banned DDT in 1972, dicofol missed the screening because DDT was not listed as an active ingredient. Concentrations of DDT in wildlife tested after 1972 decreased, but in 1984 levels increased in some fish and birds. About a million acres of cropland are sprayed with dicofol annually, releasing a quarter-million pounds of DDT and related compounds into the environment (an improvement over the twelve million formerly used, but still considered significant). A "cleaned-up" version of dicofol was agreed to recently by the EPA but they themselves state they cannot determine whether or not this new formula will have adverse effects on the environment. They do not have enough funds to do their own testing. A list of commercial products containing dicofol is included. (This may not be complete. When buying garden products it is recommended to check whether they contain dicofol; it may be designated "Kelthane", but sometimes neither name appears in the trade name.) Anyone wishing to read the article may borrow it from TFN Library (thanks to Phil Joiner). Call 690-1963.

DB

Recently published:

BIRDS OF THE PETAWAWA NATIONAL FORESTRY INSTITUTE, CHALK RIVER, ONTARIO, FIELD CHECKLIST AND HABITAT MAP BY W.R. Clark and D.A. Clark.  
For further information contact Dave Lemkay, Information Officer, Petawawa National Forestry Institute, Chalk River, Ont. K0J 1J0.

A GUIDE TO TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' NATURE RESERVE, Leaskdale, Ontario published by the Toronto Field Naturalists, 1986 (\$2.00 each at meetings; \$2.50 for mail order copies)

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IN THE HIGH DESERT COUNTRY - Malheur Wildlife Refuge
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Established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 to protect nesting and migratory birds, Malheur Wildlife Refuge is situated in southeastern Oregon some 35 miles southeast of Burns. It is a semi-arid region of 183,000 acres, 4100 feet above sea level, mostly marshes interspersed with grassy, shrubby meadows, surrounded by basaltic rimrocks and dry hills covered with sagebrush and juniper. The mountains in the distance are all volcanic in origin. Steens Mountain, the most spectacular, is the only one to have been glaciated. Hot springs bubble up here and there. Unusually heavy snowfalls in the mountains have caused flooding in recent years; marshes have become lakes, ranches and homes have disappeared under the water and wildlife has had to adjust.

The field station on the Refuge is used by Linfield College for its Elderhostel program, of interest to those who enjoy bird-watching, botany, geology, and anthropology. I registered for the week of April 28 to May 4, 1985, and enjoyed it so much I stayed on for a second week. The staff consists of a resident manager and his wife, Ethan and Mary Perkins, with some additional help in busy periods. When we arrived we were struck by the spartan nature of the accommodation - gray metal hospital-type beds, each with matching chair and locker, in large rooms at each end of the dorms and, in the centre of each dorm, a huge shower room with central pipe supporting six pairs of faucets so that six people could shower at one time. After the initial shock, we discovered the beds were comfortable, the hot water plentiful, and the meals excellent. And really, what else does one need? The quality of the food and the efficiency with which Mary and Ethan coped filled us with admiration.

Marilyn Couture is the director of the Elderhostel program for Linfield College. She is an anthropologist who has worked closely with Paiute Indian people, two hundred of whom live in Burns. In the past the Paiute who inhabited the region lived a somewhat nomadic existence in small family groups, migrating from marsh to prairie to mountain, to take advantage of food resources. They gathered berries and seeds, plants and roots, captured groundhogs and rabbits, trapped wildfowl in the flightless stage, fished and hunted. The land supplied all their needs. They honoured the land; they did not think they owned it. On field trips we saw caves they had used, pictographs, and grinding-stones. Marilyn's respect and admiration for the Paiute has been repaid by their trust in her and their willingness to participate in a very fine film. THE EARTH IS OUR HOME was made by the Oregon Historical Society with Marilyn as consultant. In it the Paiute way of life is told by Indian women living in Burns.

Joe Couture, a graduate of the University of Oregon, lectured on the geology of the area and led a day's field trip to the Diamond Craters. We stopped at three craters, each illustrating a specific type of volcanic activity. The first was a cinder crater, where cinders had been repeatedly thrown into the air by escaping steam, only to fall back into the crater and become coated with molten lava. Finally chunks known as "volcanic bombs" were thrown clear. Although visitors were warned not to pick up specimens, this being an historic site, the highway department was using this material to repair roads. The second crater was Maar, where we stopped for lunch. It had been created by a steam explosion, caused by molten lava coming in contact with water, leaving a very deep depression. A pair of cinnamon teal were swimming in the pool at the bottom when we arrived; marsh and rock wrens sang while we ate our lunch. The last crater we visited was a pit crater. In this case, lava had risen and

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## IN THE HIGH DESERT COUNTRY - cont'd

spilled over the edge. The centre had fallen in, leaving a huge pit. As we studied the pit, we were observed. A great horned owl and two babies were perched on a ledge part way down. Driving back to the field station, our attention was called to the shape of the mountains in the distance. Tensions beneath the surface had caused blocks of earth to tip up along fault lines, resulting in long, narrow mountains with steep slopes on one side and long, gradual slopes on the other. Joe's enthusiasm for this fascinating landscape was contagious; it was a day full of interest.

Dave Marshall whose chief interest is birds but who discussed many other topics was the resident biologist at Malheur some years ago. At that time there had been concern that the trumpeter swan might become extinct. The only known breeding population was at Red Rock Wildlife in Montana. These large birds will not reproduce unless certain territorial requirements are met. Since the population in Montana was not increasing, it was decided to pull some of the swans from Red Rock and attempt to start a population at Malheur. Dave succeeded in establishing a colony in 1950. We saw several descendants. Reproduction is low but sufficient to maintain the population. A colony of several thousand trumpeter swans was discovered in Alaska in the 1960's.

Greater sandhill cranes are a concern at the moment. Some 690 pairs nest in Oregon, most of them at Malheur. Ravens are taking the eggs, and coyotes, on the increase and unable to exist on a dwindling supply of black-tailed jack-rabbits, are taking the young. The situation is so grave that conservationists, government representatives, and members of Audubon and Sierra Clubs met at the field station for a conference May 3-5 to seek solutions.

While trumpeter swans and greater sandhill cranes are considered the two most important species at Malheur, I found many others a delight. We were awakened each morning by the call of a willet perched at the top of a telephone pole outside our window. Early morning bird walks never failed to turn up a western meadowlark singing from the same bush, as we followed the nature trail toward South Coyote Butte. Black-throated sparrows flitted and sang among the shrubs on the hillside, and rock wrens darted in and out among the rocks at the top, stopping now and then to sing. As I ate lunch, sitting on a rock at the top of the Butte one day, one of them suddenly landed on a rock not a foot away. We stared at each other until a little sage lizard ran along the rock and the bird flew. Another day it was a surprise when two seemingly nondescript pieces of wood in a field turned out to be two short-eared owls. It was exciting to see a pair of western grebes dancing across the water in front of the Visitors' Centre, no less than to watch male sage grouse carrying out their courtship display. This is performed early each morning on the same stretch of rather barren field from late February on. Some twenty to thirty birds were displaying on April 30. A week later this activity had practically ceased. On two occasions we saw flocks of white pelicans. We were told they were probably nesting on an island in Upper Klamath Lake. They will fly sixty miles to feed. Since returning home, one of my Elderhostel friends has sent me a newspaper clipping stating that the water level in Malheur Lake has dropped somewhat, an island has appeared in the middle of the lake and white pelicans are nesting there, the first at Malheur since 1960.

There were few wildflowers in bloom. The exception was the beautiful little sand lily (*Leucocrinum montanum*) blooming among the sagebrush along a road in the

IN THE HIGH DESERT COUNTRY - cont'd

Diamond Valley. There were interesting shrubs along the nature trail - budsage (*Artemisia spinescens*), rabbitbrushes (*Chrysothamnus* sp), big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), black greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), saltbrush (*Atriplex confertifolia*), seablite (*suaeda* sp), spiny hopsage (*grayia spinosa*), and little leaf horsebrush (*Tetradymia glabrata*). At first glance these plants, mostly dull or grey-green in colour, did not awaken much interest, but closer examination revealed how very different each was from the other. Some lines from OREGON'S GREAT BASIN COUNTRY by Denzel and Nancy Ferguson, express my feelings, "Those who stay a few days in the desert eventually stop searching for trees and begin to see what is present - a wonderfully diverse and fantastically interesting assemblage of desert-adapted plants - tough but fragile - nondescript from a distance but intricate up close." Giant wild rye (*Elymus cinerens*) and cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*) also grew along the trail. The exotic cheat grass unfortunately is choking out one of the very rare and endangered native plants - the Malheur wire lettuce (*Stephanomeria malheurenensis*). Another grass, crested wheat grass, has been sown after a fire since it grows quickly. The problem is it is a monoculture and does not provide food for a variety of creatures.

Sago pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*) is a very important waterfowl food - for coots, ducks, geese and swans. Dave told us that carp were accidentally introduced in the 1930's. The Refuge has been unsuccessful in trying to get rid of them. They root out and eat the sago pondweed.

Muskrats were swimming in the marsh near the field station. We had a good view of coyotes travelling singly, and of antelopes which were usually in small groups. We made a special detour over a just-barely-driveable road, followed by a half-mile walk to Borax Lake to see a tiny minnow-like fish - the Borax Lake chub, which is on the endangered list. The fish were swimming in the warm water near the edge of the lake, which is formed by hot springs flowing into a natural basin. The springs and lake contain boron and for ten years, at the turn of the century, Chinese labourers were employed to scrape up the white salty crusts that coated the ground around the lake. This was treated with boiling water and acid, in vats fired by sagebrush, and borax extracted.

Do you know the difference between a National Park (U.S.) and a National Wildlife Refuge? I didn't. A National Park is administered by the National Parks Service under the Department of the Interior. In National Parks a hands-off policy is observed. Nature is allowed to take its course. National Wildlife Refuges are administered by Fish and Wildlife under the Department of the Interior. Refuges are usually managed in the interests of the wildlife. For example at Malheur controlled burning is practised, burning off this year's crop of vegetation to allow fresh green shoots to develop the following spring. For the same reason grazing is allowed. A rancher may graze a cow and a calf for about \$3 a month. This is not done in the interests of the rancher, it is simply another way of removing mature vegetation to promote new growth for wildlife the next year.

Among the refuges I have visited, Malheur is a very special one. I hope Marilyn Couture will be able to maintain her enthusiasm for Elderhosteling and that she and her staff will continue to provide such a varied and interesting program in the high desert country of Oregon.

Marjorie Blackshaw

Ed.Note - For information on Elderhostel call 690-1963 or your Public Library.

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THE WEATHER THIS TIME LAST YEAR
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March 1985, Toronto area

March was mild and sunny with a mean temperature at Toronto City of 21.°C, 1.4° above normal; the international airport had a mean of 0.3°C, 1.3° above normal. Sunshine hours at Toronto City of 162.5 were close to 20 hours more than usual. It hit 18°C at both the City and airport on the 27th. This was the warmest since 1981.

Still, we can't call this an entirely tranquil month. The first day was "lamb-like", but conditions rapidly deteriorated with the worst storm of the season striking on the 4th. We had close to 30 cm of snow mixed with ice pellets, freezing rain, and storm-force winds gusting to 100 km/h at Toronto Island. Zero visibility in blowing snow prevailed for the first half of the day; many schools and businesses were shut down. Things calmed down considerably thereafter with mainly mild temperatures, considerable sunshine, and several minor disturbances accompanied by breezes and light showers/flurries. This peaked in 1985's first real warmth on the 27th, but moisture accompanied the warmth. As the oscillating polar front was gradually pushed south again, a major storm developed and moved just south of the Toronto region on the 31st. March left "like a lion" with sustained winds of 42 km/h all day along the lakeshore, heavy rain and freezing rain, with power outages.

The month ended up wetter than average due to the two storms on the 4th and 31st, a good 107.7 mm of precipitation downtown, the most since 1976. The compartments of rain and snow were each highest since 1980. Average windspeeds were light along the lakefront, but brisk at the airport, 20.6 and 20.9 km/h respectively. This is 0.6 km/h lighter than normal at Toronto Island but a good 4.5 km/h brisker than usual at the International Airport and the highest since 1974.

Gavin Miller

□

## WINDBIRDS

A  
 fistful  
 of birds  
 sown in the wind  
 scattered and skating  
 on a wind spur  
 disarrayed  
 for a moment -  
 then sliding together in scimitar shape  
 and skimming the sky.

Louise Herzberg

# COMING EVENTS

## COMING EVENTS

### Civic Garden Centre

March 5, 6, 7, 10.00 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Garden Club of Toronto Flower Show. Civic Garden Centre, 777 Lawrence Ave. E., Don Mills. Telephone 447-5218.

### Royal Canadian Institute

The following lectures will be given Sunday afternoons at 3.00 p.m. at the Medical Sciences Auditorium, University of Toronto. Admission free. Telephone 928-2096 for further information.

- March 2 - From TB to T-Cells: A Historical Perspective on Immunology in Ontario - Robert H. Painter, B.Sc., Ph.D., Professor of Biochemistry, University of Toronto.
- March 9 - Eating Disorders and the Idealization of Thinness - Janet Polivy, B.Sc., M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Psychology; Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Toronto.
- March 16 - Hazardous Wastes: Let's Treat Them Right - Donald A. Chant, M.A., Ph.D., Chairman and President, Ontario Waste Management Corporation.

### Royal Ontario Museum

To April 27 - "Drawn from the Sea: Art in the Service of Ichthyology" - An exhibition of approximately 70 pencil drawings, watercolours, and bookplates of fish from around the world. Telephone 586-5549 for details.

### McLaughlin Planetarium

"The Return of Comet Halley" continues to April 27. For information telephone 586-5736.

### Kortright Centre for Conservation

February 20 at 6.30 p.m., and Saturday February 22, at 7.30 p.m. - Owl Prowl. The Kortright Centre is on Pine Valley Drive, south of Major Mackenzie Drive, 3 km west of Highway 400. Telephone 661-6600.

### Clive and Joy Goodwin

Commencing Tuesday, March 25 - Birding in Spring. A four-week, two field trip course for beginners, at Orchard View Library. Telephone the Goodwins at 249-9503 for details.

### Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton

The new Mediterranean House will be open to the public on and after March 2 at the headquarters of R.B.G. on Plains Road, Hamilton. The Director of the Gardens is the speaker at the TFN meeting on March 3. (see page 40.)

March 28, 8.00 p.m. Outdoor Film Adventure Festival, "Animal Antics". Former Disney photographer, Ken Tent-Durden, has assembled a very funny collection of film excerpts featuring nature's own comedy troupe. R.B.G. Centre, Hamilton. Adults \$3.00; Children and Students \$1.50. For more information telephone (416) 527-1158.

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# TFN MEETINGS



## GENERAL MEETINGS

Board of Education Centre, 6th Floor Auditorium  
155 College Street, at McCaul

Monday, March 3, 1986. 8.00 p.m. (Coffee at 7.15)

West Along Latitude 43N - the Mediterranean Comes to Canada  
- Allen Paterson, Director, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton.  
During the first week of March, the new Mediterranean greenhouse  
will be opened in the Royal Botanical Gardens. This display  
will concentrate on plants of the five regions of the world  
with a Mediterranean climate. Mr. Paterson will discuss the  
botanical background of this exciting new facility.

Monday, April 7, 1986. 8.00 p.m.

Birding in the South Pacific - Ms Verna Higgins, Professor,  
Department of Botany, University of Toronto.

\* \* \* \* \*

## GROUP MEETINGS

### Bird Group

Wed. Mar. 12 Spring Birds  
7.30 p.m.

Location: Auditorium, Education Centre, 155 College Street,  
1 block west of University Avenue.

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### Botany Group

Thur. Mar. 13 Flora of Muskoka - John Harris  
7.30 p.m.

Location: Room 204, Botany Building, University of Toronto  
northwest corner of College and University.

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### Environmental Group

Thur. Mar. 27 Studies of Fishes in Metro's Rivers; illustrated with  
7.30 p.m. slides. - Robert Steedman.

Location: Huron Public School, 541 Huron Street, 1 block west  
of St. George subway station.

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### Junior Club

Sat. Mar. 1 Display Day  
10.00 a.m.

Location: Royal Ontario Museum.

As well as TFN publications, hasti-notes, reproductions of Newsletter art,  
and raffle tickets to support the purchase of Alfred Bog near Ottawa, will  
be for sale at the monthly general meeting.

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## TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS

83 Joicey Boulevard  
Toronto, Ontario M5M 2T4

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### TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

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Members are encouraged to submit notices, reports, articles up to 1,500 words in length and illustrations at least six weeks before the month in which the event is to take place or the material is required to appear.

#### Other Publications

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB: ITS HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION by R.M. Saunders, 1965 .....	\$ .50	TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' RAVINE SURVEYS. \$ 2.00 ea. Survey #1-Chatsworth Ravine, 1973 Survey #2-Brookbanks Ravine, 1974 Survey #3-Chapman Valley Ravine, 1975 Survey #4-Wigmore Ravine, 1975 Survey #5-Park Drive Ravine, 1976 Survey #6-Burke Ravine, 1977 Survey #7-Taylor Creek-Woodbine Bridge Ravines, 1977 Survey #8-West Don Valley, 1978	
CHECKLIST OF PLANTS IN FOUR TORONTO PARKS: WILKET CREEK, HIGH PARK, HUMBER VALLEY, LAMBTON WOODS, 1972 .....	.50	INDEX OF TFN NEWSLETTERS (1938-1978) .....	10.00
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FIELD CHECKLIST OF PLANTS OF SOUTHERN ONTARIO, 1977 ....5/\$1.00 or .....	.25 ea.	AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES OF METRO TORONTO, 1983 .....	2.00
TORONTO REGION VERTEBRATE LIST (fishes, amphibians, reptiles, mammals), 1985 5/\$1.00 or	.25 ea.	TORONTO REGION BIRD CHART, 1983 .....	2.00
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		GUIDE TO TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' NATURE RESERVE, Leaskdale, Ontario, 1986	2.00

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